GUIDE TO THE AK5 LEPCHA FILE

[The Lepcha file consists of eleven sources of which two are translations from the German. The main sources are by Geoffrey Gorer (1: Gorer) and Joh Morris (2: Morris), the field data of both being collected during the same months of 1937. Gorer's volume is more strongly oriented toward the interrelationships of culture and personality than is that of Morris, but taken together they give a good picture of Lepcha culture. Their material is brought up to date and amplified by the inclusion of five articles by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz (3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 4: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 5: Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer, 6: Nebesky-Wojkowitze, and 8: Nebesky-Wojkowitz). These articles include data on hunting and fishing, funeral ceremonies, legends, and other aspects of ceremonial. A section from a work by H. H. Risley (9: Risely) gives some anthropometric data. A selection from Joseph Hooker's journal (7: Hooker) adds material on Lepcha culture during the middle of the nineteenth century, while the article by Waddell (10: Waddell) discusses Lepcha song styles. 11: Hermanns discusses myths, supernatural beings, beliefs in and descriptions of the land of the dead, religious practitioners and ceremonies, and related information.

In general, this is a well-rounded file, containing adequate material on most aspects of Lepcha culture. The only major lack is in the sphere of language, on which little information exists. Two special marking decisions were made: information on the Mun, a combination shaman, magician and diviner, has been placed in category 756, and information on general protective ceremonial being placed in category 796. The file was processed between 1958 and 1962.]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered Lepchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in Sikkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were employed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropologists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere else as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has apparently been found between the Lepcha language and some dialect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the people of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of their own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans at some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. 'Lepcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though the philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the Russian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since all books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, it would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word would appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present Darjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before the beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]. They are especially near the 'Arleng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pô* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Forbes, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all. 114 174

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapche' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2], because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mô-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Talaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu. 101 ●

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3], is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-ware, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4] by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He 212 114

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[1] From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nangu*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Naga*s is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2] It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of 'Welsh' or 'the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps 'Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. TAYLOR's „Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3] The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikkim'.

[4] This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. PAUL (pp. 1—39), where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1686, died 1717 A. D.

192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riāk-bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha
192 book, the *Tashe sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words
114 freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1], and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve
533 many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by
192 the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2] though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

●101 One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the
192 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi*' *Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1] Thus '*So-ed-tag*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*y'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-tab*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÖNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2] The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 375.

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192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
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103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-lam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
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As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ran-miñ*' and '*sor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*go*', (gos) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words were descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

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CHAPTER III

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According to one opinion the Lepchas are supposed 173 to have come not from Tibet, but from the east of the mountains from Assam and Upper Burma.[22] Their own tradition, however, states that their original home was in the neighbourhood [103] of the great mountain, Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga[23] the second highest mountain in the world. That is the Tibetan name and means the "Great Glacier of the Five Store-rooms." The Lepcha name for the mountain is, "King-tzum-song-bu." King-tzum means "Highest part of the forehead," song-bu means "the highest." Literally it means, "the highest over our head." This Lepcha name is reproduced phonetically by the Tibetans as "Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga," which has quite a different meaning. This snow-covered mountain has [776] an important part to play as the habitat of the spirits. King-tzum-rum is the god of happiness; Rum-king-tzum is the god of fate.[24] From it the Lepchas derive the name Rong, by which they are known. Rong means "peak" or "mountain peak" and has the same significance as the word Arong.

Another tradition has it that the place of their origin is on the holy mountain Kailasa (Ti se) way up in Tibet. On the mountain is the stone Ne-long which bears the footprints [778 of Buddha and of animals. The god, Pum-rum, protector of 776] the hunters, lives there. Pum-rum is also another name for the Supreme God of the Lepchas as we shall soon see. The

22. J. C. White, Sikkim and Bhutan, London, 1909, p. 7.
23. Kangchenjunga, Fig. 17 & 18.
24. G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, Berlin 1898, 17a, 256 b.

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in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the protoparent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same context of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

5. Lepcha

197 The Lepcha kinship terminology presents a distinctive set of problems not previously encountered in our review of the field. Our data on the Lepcha, both linguistic and ethnographic, are fairly adequate, and this situation in itself constitutes something of a novelty. Gorer has contributed a remarkable study of Lingthem, a Lepcha village in Zongu (Sikkim) in which Lepcha culture has been preserved as a relatively homogeneous unit. Morris has written a popular account involving some of the same material, and the folklore has been studied by Stocks. Both Gorer and Stocks give lists of kinship terms, which agree in most respects and tend to supplement one another. On the ethnographic side, Gorer gives us a complete picture of clan organization, marriage regulations, kin behaviour, etc. Stocks' article includes scattered notes on Lepcha customs, and marriageable and non-marriageable kin are indicated as such in her list of terms, but this material includes a number of obvious errors and is not entirely trustworthy; Gorer remarks (p. 41) that her notes "correspond in practically no particular with my observations" . On the linguistic side, the grammar and dictionary of Mainwaring, the latter carefully edited by Grünwedel, supply a rich storehouse of raw material, perhaps as important a single source as any in this general field. Gorer's unkind remarks (pp. 39 sq.) can scarcely be justified, especially in view of the fact that his own incorrect forms

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with [287] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either [361] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and [161] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the 527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[p. 29]

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APPENDIX VI

A NOTE ON THE LEPCHA LANGUAGE

104 194 Since I am no philologist, the following notes can only be of very slight value. I am giving them chiefly to account for my principle of transliteration. Lepcha is said (Linguistic Survey of India) to belong to the Tibetan-Burman group of languages. It is non-pronominalised and not tonal. It is fundamentally a monsyllabic language, as was recognised in the alphabet invented by King Chador. This alphabet consists of 56 signs—the initial vowel a, 37 initial consonants, 10 vowels, indicated by diacritic marks, and 8 final consonants, also indicated by diacritic marks, with the result that each initial consonant with its diacritic marks represents a syllable and most usually a word. The initial consonants are: k, kl, kh, g, gl, ng, ch, chh, j, ny, t, th, d, n, p, pl, ph, f, fl, b, bl, m, ml, ts, tsh, z, y, r, l, h, hl, v, s, sh, w. TH and PH are aspirated (as in English ho*th*ouse) and J is always pronounced as in French *jamais*; otherwise the consonants (with the exception of the initial NG which has no equivalent in Western European languages) are pronounced much the same as in English. The final consonants are k, ng, t, n, p, r, l, m. The chief difficulty in transliteration has been the vowel sounds; the alphabet has ten vowel signs, long and short a, e, i, o, u: but, apart from the nuisance of employing diacritic marks in every word, Lepcha has a greater number of vowel sounds than this, and I have therefore used dipthongs, especially to represent the varied O and U sounds. I have employed the following combinations of letters:

a	as in hat
aa	„ balm, Haag (Dutch)
ah	„ ah! has (French)
au	„ autumn
e	„ bet
é	„ make, *été* (French)
ee	„ beat
i	„ pit
i not followed by a consonant	„ sea
o	„ pot
oa	„ boat
oh	„ cocoa
oo	„ book
ou	„ you
u	„ but
u not followed by a consonant	„ Hugh, hue
eu	„ peu (French)
ü	„ über (German)
'	„ petit (French) behave.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

VOCABULARY OF LEPCHA WORDS

104 (*Note*: I am not giving in this vocabulary words and phrases which are only used once with an immediate translation. I have not thought it worth while in so short a vocabulary to distinguish true Lepcha words from Tibetan loan words; most of the words connected with lamaism are derived from the Tibetan.

I have listed all words beginning with an initial A- under the second letter, as this initial A- is constantly elided in Lepcha.)

a-Bek	between.
bek-bu	(lit.) between-man; man who arranges marriages.
ben (or ta-ben)	vulva.
bi	vegetable stew: 'curry'.
bri	marriage feast, when the bride comes to her husband's home.
Chapti-bu	lowest grade of lama.
chap-tok	validating feast given by lamas.
ché-né	(1) lamaist priest. (2) lamaist ceremony.
cher-kem	offering to devils made either by laymen or lamas during lamaist ceremonies: consists of mixed grains floating in strained *chi* which is thrown on to the ground with a wooden spoon to the cry of "*Lo chi-do*"—take this.
chi	Lepcha beer: made by pouring boiling water on to fermented millet or other grain: drunk hot.
chi-chembu	a lamaist grade—'resting canon'.
chi-mi	altar lights; egg-cup-shaped metal containers filled with oil or butter with a wick of cloth or bamboo.
chithembu	a lamaist grade: monastery overseer.
cho-bu	(lit.) book-man: a lama.
cho-ten	a rectangular lamaist barrow with religious formulae carved on the stones at the side; sometimes a tomb, sometimes empty.
chongbu-tipkū	twisted pieces of dough which form part of the sacrificial objects in lamaist ceremonies and which are usually waved over the person, for whom the ceremony is performed, at the end of the ceremony.
Da-floh	a ceremonial dance in front of a lamaist altar.
dé-ong	the 'parlour' in Lepcha houses: the second room often

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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	containing a lamaist altar, in which lamaist ceremonies are performed.
deu	'palace of the supernatural'; a geometrical construction of coloured thread on a bamboo support: may be anything from three inches to ten feet high: varies according to which (lamaist) ceremony it is made for.
dorjé	thunderbolt; small brass object in higher-grade lama's private religious objects.
dorjé Lapoon	highest grade of lama: teacher.
doam	leprosy.
a-dum	white.
Elaiji (Nepali)	cardamum
a-Faar	price.
faat	sacrifice (Mun).
fleng	youth: adult man who has not yet begotten a child.
fo	bird.
Ga-zook	the head, one fore-leg and one hind-leg of the animal sacrificed by a Mun.
gé-long	celibate lama
gya-pōn	village official: a temporary post.
Hloang-zok	a feast given by the Mandal to all the villagers to clear one of their number from debt or to get contributions for his marriage expenses.
In-é-bu	nun; in lamaist monastery.
ing-ha	infant.
ing-zong	trading friend, with whom a ceremonial pact of friendship has been made. *Also* used loosely to mean 'my special friend'.
Jyut-bu (-mu)	adopting father (or mother).
jem-mi	The old Lepcha title for the Mandal, the village headman.
jethi (Nepali)	(lit.) eldest sister; elder co-wife.
Kané	lamaist grade: assistant to higher lamas.
kanchi (Nepali)	(lit.) youngest sister; younger co-wife.
kanya	trader and money-lender.
ké	tax.
ké-bu	tax-payer, tenant, house-holder.
ké-tsop	(lit.) substitute tax-(payer); heir appointed by the Mandal to administer property if the real heir is an infant, or to possess it if there are no heirs in direct succession.
ket ma-ni-ne	it is of no consequence.
king-koor	lamaist altar in private house.
klon	(honorific word) to present.
ko-chet	a good child (lit. one who understands).

1:Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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komok myok	resident son-in-law : man living in his wife's house.
kongso-klon	a mystic lamaist ceremony performed in a *tyang-gong* to drive away devils.
koong	(1) tree (2) house-pillar (3) mountain peak.
a-kup	child : small thing.
kup-tsop	(lit.) substitute child : adopted child.
a-kut	a symbolical present of a piece of cooked meat, accepted by parents-in-law instead of the bride-price from a poor but otherwise suitable groom.
La-fét	(lit.) winnowing tray ; the Mun sacrifice made on a winnowing tray, on which is placed first banana leaves, then grain, ginger, dried bird, dried fish, etc. ; one of the commonest Mun ceremonies.
lapoon	lamaist teacher.
la-yo	sin (in the lamaist sense).
lha	lamaist god.
lha-gong	the room in the monastery containing the big prayer-wheels ; under the supervision of the nuns.
li	house.
lo-kor	the 12-year animal cycle ; the representations of these twelve years.
loong	qualification to do or perform something ; the ceremony by which a teacher acknowledges his pupil's efficiency.
lung-then	(1) old-established custom. (2) stories of how things are as they are to-day : fables.
lyang	place.
Mak	die : dead.
mandal	the head of the village.
mani	abbreviation of the formula *Om ! Mani pudme hum !* : prayer-flags so inscribed set up for the dead.
a-mik	eye.
mik-dum	(lit.) white eyes ; an uncomplimentary word for Europeans.
mik-jit	(lit.) eye piss : envy.
a-mik hér	evil eye ; a person who has seen grain drying in the sun before everybody has made the offerings to the Men of Mayel.
moong	devil : evilly-disposed supernatural.
muktair	the head of a group of villages.
mun	a man or woman possessed by the Mun spirit : a priest of the Lepcha religion.
mun-then	private contemplation in which a Mun enters into communication with his possessing spirit.
myok	son-in-law : bridegroom.
Nam	year.
nam-toak	a year of disaster ; the punishment which threatens the community if one of its members commits a very grave social crime such as incest.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

nan-djé-mu	a woman who dances possessed by a supernatural and in that state can divine.
num-neu-zong	blood relations; people with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous.
num-leng	an adult girl who has not yet borne a child.
nyom	daughter-in-law: bride.
a-nyou	lady; title given to Queens, supernaturals, mothers-in-law (by men), sisters of parents.
Omzet	high lamaist rank: 'bishop'.
ook	shame.
oong	water.
oong-op	potential levirate or sororate spouse; person with whom sexual intercourse is permissive.
Pa-dem	man possessed by Padem spirit; similar to, but weaker than Mun.
pa-hip	'straw'; a thin species of bamboo through which *chi* is drunk.
pan-di	queen.
pan-kar	thonged stick kept in monastery to be used by *chithembu* if people misbehave.
pa-no	king.
pa-tyoot	'tankard'; a ten-inch section of bamboo with a natural fibrous bottom from which *chi* is drunk.
pau	a male nan-djé-mu.
pék	the act of waving some object over a real or potential sufferer; the curative and cleansing rite of Mun and, to a less extent, lamas.
pong	sticks with bits of wool on, in lamaist ceremonies always placed besides *deu* to represent the clouds surrounding the supernatural's palace.
ptso	the patrilineal group.
Rong	Lepcha.
rum	(1) god: benevolently-disposed supernatural. (2) a Mun offering to the gods or devils, consisting in a basket filled with earth, into which are inserted a number of containers of various sorts of food and drink, etc.
rum-faat-bu	the sacrificer or officiant at Mun ceremonies; need not necessarily be a Mun; many ceremonies can be performed by any old man with *loong*.
rum-lyang	(lit.) place of the gods; the place where, according to Mun eschatology the soul lives before and after life.
Sa-dher	'thunder-bird'—'dragon'.
sak-lyak	(1) angry; (2) sexually excited.
sa-kyou	butter.
sakyou-faat	(lit.) butter sacrifice; the chief Mun sacrament, consisting of drinking strained *chi* out of a cup on the rim of which dabs of butter have been placed.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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sang-lion	The Mun and lamaist ceremonies for conducting the soul of the dead from this world to the next.
a-sék	(1) betrothal, the payment of the bride-price; (2) the formal adoption of a child (not closely related): the payment of the price of such a child.
sé-pano	sahib; complimentary term for European.
sha-fot	the heart, liver and lungs of the sacrifical animal in a Mun sacrifice.
shadong ding	'the sulks'; fit a of bad temper when a hungry or irritated person breaks things, throws stones etc.
s'lek	a dioeceous plant found above the snow level which Mun prepare and give as amulets against devils.
sing	'field garden'; a piece of fenced ground by the house in which are grown vegetables, grain, bamboos, etc.
Ta-foot	some internal organ, spleen or gall-bladder?
tam-toom	the ineluctable result of some antecedent act; may affect the actor or his descendants.
ta-né	bad child.
tang-bor	an elegant periphrasis for a common-speech word.
tan-ji	a genito-urinary disease; possibly a very mild form of gonorrhea.
thimbu	big.
a-thing	lord; title given to supernaturals and very important men.
thip-song	the ceremony which has to be performed when an unmarried girl is pregnant with a bastard to ward off the hail.
thop-song	the living-room in a Lepcha house: 'the kitchen'.
thyak	head (part of body).
thyak-dum	(lit.) white head; the ambivalent 'house goblin'.
tik (or ta-tik)	penis.
tong-peun-bu	a low grade of lamas: 'choristers'.
tsop	substitute.
tuk	a mat used as head protection against sun and rain: an 'umbrella'.
tyang-gong	a completely dark room in which lamas shut themselves up for mystic contemplation and practices.
tyol	friend (an unemotional word).
tyü	sacred water, over which lamas have prayed and into which various things have been placed.
Vyim	wood which produces a red dye.
Yaba (fem. Yama)	possessed priests similar to nandjému.
yeumbu	(lit.) one who knows; a wise old man.
yook-mun	(lit.) honoured Mun: a lama.
you-mi	a consultant village official, chosen from ex-gyapön.
a-Zong	potential levirate or sororate spouse.

[p. 502 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

A NOTE TO THE READER

I USED TO THINK that T. E. Lawrence was being merely facetious when he refused to write Arabic words in conformity with any known system of transliteration. But I have come to think, with him, that "there are some 'scientific systems' of transliteration, helpful to people who know enough Arabic [but this applies just as much to other oriental languages] not to need helping, but a wash-out for the world. I spell my names anyhow," he continues, "to show what rot the systems are." (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*) 104

I would not go quite so far as this, however, and would willingly use any system that gave a reader, one with no previous knowledge of the subject, some idea of the actual sounds of Lepcha words. But the Lepcha language is full of Tibetan, in the transliteration of which even the experts have so far failed to agree. What, for instance, can one make of a word like *Bye-brag-tu rtogs byad* (this really is a Tibetan word), which one of the leading exponents of Lamaism tells me is pronounced *Je-tak-tu tog-je?* (Waddell: page 165).

But enough of this nonsense! It only remains to add that I have spelt Lepcha and Tibetan words as they sounded to me when spoken by a Lepcha, giving the vowels approximately their Italian value, and using the consonants as in English. This is near enough for all practical purposes: but, in any case, no one who reads this book is likely to want to know how to pronounce Tibetan or Lepcha; and if he does, I feel sure that the London School of Oriental Studies would be delighted to teach him.

I have generally written Tibetan and Lepcha words in italics only the first time that I have used them, but have occasionally departed from this custom for the sake of emphasising some particular word.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5
SIKKIM AK3

1. The first and main propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim was Lama *Lha btsun nam mkha hjigs med* (shortly called *Lha btsun chhen po*) who belonged to the Tibetan *rDzogs chhen pa* Sect. He was later joined by a number of other learned priests, among whom the *rNying ma pa* Lama *Kha thog kun tu bzang po* and Lama *mNga bdag sems pa phun tshogs rig hdzin* were the two most outstanding personalities. It seems that the work of spreading Buddhism in Sikkim was begun in 1642, in which year also the coronation of the first Maharaja of Sikkim, *Phun tshogs rnam rgyal* is said to have taken place. After *Lha btsun chhen po's* death his first reincarnation, called *Mi bskyod dga ba*, was found at *hBum thang in Bhutan*. S 797

2. The influx of Tibetan settlers began with the advent of *Gyad hbum bsags* the ancestor of the present ruling family of the Sikkim State, who reached this area via the Chumbi Valley (Tb. *Gro mo*) towards the end of the 16th century. *Gyad hbum bsags* was accompanied by a number of Tibetan retainers, who settled in Sikkim—which they called *hBras ljongs* the "Rice Country"—and who became kown as "Bhutias". They were the ancestors of the eight clans, into which the local Tibetan population became later divided. In the following centuries, also other groups of settlers arrived in Sikkim, partly from the Bhutanese districts of Ha and Pharo, and some even from Assam. In connection with the account of the first encounter between the Tibetans and the aboriginal inhabitants, the Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim mention an interesting episode : "as the (Tibetan) party happened to be riding on ponies, and some of the retainers had matchlock guns, which they went on firing along the road, the simple natives who had never seen ponies nor firearms, said to others, that the entire party rode on huge hogs, and some of them bore sticks, which produced great sounds." S 563

3. The Limbus, who call themselves Yakthumba, are mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim, together with the Mangar tribe, under the collective name *Tshong* ; the name 'Limbu' under which they are mostly known, is of Nepali origin. According to a doubtful oral tradition, they are supposed to have migrated into Sikkim from the neighbouring Tibetan province of *Tshang*. The Limbus, who were divided into ten clans, were living peacefully side by side with the Lepchas, who regarded them as distant relatives and even claimed, that the Lepcha and Limbu gods were related to each other.—The Chronicles mention, that Limbus sometimes occupied important positions in the administration of the Sikkim State, and a Limbu lady became one of the wives of the second Maharaja. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the rule of the fourth Maharaja, the majority of the Limbus left Sikkim in consequence of the heavy labour, which was being imposed on them, especially at times of the frequent raids of the neighbouring Nepalese and Bhutanese.

4. All Lepcha words, the orthography of which it was possible to ascertain, are printed in italics according to a simplified romanization, similar to the system of transcription adopted in the Dictionary of the Lepcha Languages, by G. B. Mainwaring and *A*. Gruenwedel, Berlin 1898. Also all Tibetan words are rendered in an orthographic romanization. L 104

5. About the Bardo and the beliefs connected with it see Evans-Wentz, W.Y : The Tibetan Book of the Dead, London 1927, and Tucci, G. : Il libro tibetano dei morti, Milano 1949.

6. To all those among the Lepchas who supplied me with valuable informations concerning the subject here dealt with, especially to Mrs. D. Mohan of Kalimpong, Mr. K. P. Tamsang, the Mandal of Bong Basti and to one of the oldest living Lepchas, the 105 years old "Manibu Badschi" of Nyim, my sincere thanks are due; I would also like to acknowledge gratefully the valuable assistance, rendered to me by Miss Ray Williams of Kalimpong and Father J. M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission at Gît.

7. I was unable to obtain a confirmation of the statement made by Kali Kumar Das in his The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell, JBTS, Vol. VI, Pt. 1, Calcutta 1896, p. 4, that the Lepchas believe in the presence of eight different souls in the human body.

8. They are supposed to have been created from the ice of the Kanchenjunga glaciers by the foremost god of the Lepchas *Ta ahe thing* (or *Tuk bo thing* ?).—It is today, with traditions quickly vanishing, rather difficult to establish the name of this God Creator. Due to the adoption of the name *Ta ahe* for Padmasambhava (Tb. *Padma hbyung gnas*) the main and widely venerated saint of the Unreformed Buddhist School of Tibet and the resulting [i.e., human souls, see cat. 116, p. 27. — Analyst] L 773

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitra-
194 rily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rām* or *Rōām*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tuk* 'the head' is never pronomced *Tuk* or *T'yak* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-so* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Suk-dum*, 'world', *Sa-mā* 'a bear', *Mass* or *Mēn* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-bar*' a musk-deer; *Puk-s'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yuk-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-mo*, *Mēn*, *Hlo*, *Kyung*, *Sa-bar*, *Puk-sik*, *Yuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced '*Rauām*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 298; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 168). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GAUDWARZEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppāra Jātaka*. It teems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter 4, and *ch* for *c*.

[104]

1: Gorer, Geoffrey. Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim. London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1938.

Pp. 510; 32 plates; vocabulary; index

Yale: Nkd72 I47 938g

[The field-work for this book was done by Gorer in the company of John Morris (for his description of the Lepcha see 2: Morris, this file). As a result of observations made in common, and the relatively small size of the village studied, there is some overlap in the data presented, particularly about given individuals. Gorer's work is oriented toward personality and culture, with particular attention paid to aggression. The book contains data on buildings, food-getting activities, religions, the life cycle, kinship, government, and mythology of the Lepcha. Gorer, although a journalist by profession, received training prior to entering the field from Ruty Benedict, Margaret Mead, and John Dollard. --Analyst]

Field date: 1937 Evaluation: Journalist-5
Analyst: James Leary Processed in 1958

2: Morris, John. Living with Lepchas: A Book about the Sikkim Himalayas. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938.

Pp. xvi, 312; 32 plates; end-paper map

Yale: Nkd72 I47 938m

[This is a popular account of a six-months stay among the Lepcha, a relatively unacculturated group living in northeastern India on the Tibetan border. The book is loosely organized, being divided into several parts: Introductory and Historical, The People, Magic and Spells, Family Life, Sex, Festivals, and a Conclusion with a chapter on economics. Impressionistic rather than analytic, this source should be read in conjunction with 1: Gorer, this File, Gorer having been Morris' companion during their stay with the Lepchas. Some chapters contain references at the end, but these are also included in a final bibliography. There is a three-section index of persons, places, and general items. The source is particularly strong on ceremonial, sex and personality data. Morris, a former army officer

2: Morris, John.

turned traveler and explorer, at the time of the field work held the Studentship in Anthropology of the William Wyse Foundation of the University of Cambridge. -- Analyst/

Field date: 1937
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1958

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de. Hunting and Fishing among the Lepchas. Ethnos, Vol. 18, pp. 21-30. Stockholm: The Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, 1953.

Yale: Nk10. Et7. 18 1/2

[This article describes the methods of hunting and fishing, the various weapons, traps, and poisons used, and the organization of hunting and fishing parties among the Lepchas. Nebesky-Wojkowitz, a lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Vienna, did three years of field work in this area. His materials on the Lepcha are presented in this article and in sources 4, 5, 6 and 8 this file. --Analyst]

Field date: 1950-1953
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1958

4: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de. Ancient Funeral Ceremonies of the Lepchas. The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 27-40. Lucknow: Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, U. P., 1952.

Yale: Nk10. Et295E. 4-6

[This paper describes the ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas as preserved by oral tradition and perhaps still being practiced in remote areas of Sikkim. The author also discusses the Lepcha conception of the human soul and life after death. There are notes on Lepcha diviners and healers as well as the spread of Tibetan culture into Sikkim. For information about the author, see source 3, this file. -- Analyst]

Field date: 1950-1951
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1958

5: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. von and Geoffrey Gorer. The Use of Thread-Crosses in Lepcha Lamaist Ceremonies. The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. 4, pp. 65-87. Lucknow: Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, U.P., 1951.

Yale: Nk10.Et295E.4-6

[This article describes various ceremonies in which thread-crosses of Bön origin, called deu in Lepcha and mbos in Tibetan, are used, for instance, in the Cherim ceremony and in ceremonies for the prevention and curing of diseases. The distribution of its usage among neighboring peoples is also noted briefly. The authors conclude that it is impossible to state whether the Bön elements incorporated in Lepcha ceremonies came from the original Bön religion, or whether they were introduced through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Notes to the text will be found on pp. 83-87. --Analyst]

Field date: 1937, 1950
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist, Journalist-5
Processed in 1958

6: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de. The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower (Die Legende vom Turmbau der Lepcha). Anthropos, Vol. 48, pp. 889-897. Posieux (Freiburg), Switzerland: Anthropos-Institut, 1953.

Yale: Nk10 + An89 48

HRAF manuscript pp. 1-10

(Translated from the German for the Human Relations Area Files by Theodore Ziolkowski)

[This source consists of two versions of a Lepcha legend concerning the building of a tower of pots to the sky. This legend parallels in many respects the story of the Tower of Babel. The author includes an explanation of the two versions. Included is a supplement on some archaeological potsherds from the field where the tower is supposed to have been built which may possibly be Lepcha material, although the Lepcha no longer make pottery. --Analyst]

Field date: 1950-1953
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1958

7: Hooker, Joseph Dalton. Himalayan Journals; or, Notes of a Naturalist in Bengal, the Sikkim and Nepal Himalayas, the Khasia Mountains, &c. 2 volumes. London: John Murray, 1854.

Vol. I, pp. xxviii, 408; 5 plates; 45 text figures; 2 end maps; Vol. II, pp. xii, 487; 7 plates; 35 text figures

Yale: Eefa 848 v.1-2

[Only pp. 122-141 of Vol. I, which contain material on the Lepchas, have been processed for the Files.]

[This source is an early travel account which contains materials on the Lepcha area. Included are data on personality, food, clothing, racial affinities, and religion. By modern ethnographic standards, this source would not be highly regarded, but it is valuable from the point of view of culture change for comparative purposes. Hooker was a famous physician of the Victorian period in England. --Analyst]

Field date: 1849-1851 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1958

8: Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René. New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet (Neuerwerbungen aus Sikkim und Tibet). Archiv für Völkerkunde, Vol. 8, pp. 269-272. Vienna, 1953.

Yale:

HRAF manuscript: pp. 1-5

/Translated from the German for the Human Relations Area Files by Theodore Ziolkowski. /

/This brief source is mainly a listing of the items acquired for the collections of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna by Nebesky-Wojkowitz during his field trip to Sikkim in 1950-1953, including Lepcha and Tibetan materials. Of special interest is the equipment of a Mun priestess which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known, recently defunct priestess. --Analyst/

Field data: 1950-1953
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1958.

9: Risley, H.H. The Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Anthropometric Data. Vol. 1. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1891.

Pp. x, xxxviii, 429

Yale: A.O.S. Va R49 v. 1

[Only pp. 240-247, which contain material on the Lepcha, have been processed for the Files]

[This section of the main source consists of two tables giving anthropometric data on 57 Lepcha living in Darjeeling and Sikkim. The measurements were taken with methods and devices recommended by Paul Topinard, with the exception of the naso-malar index which was taken according to the description of Oldfield Thomas. Risley was an officer in the Indian Civil Service. --Analyst]

Field date: 1886-1888 Evaluation: Government Official-5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1958

111 AK5 Lepcha

10: Waddell, L.A. The 'Lepchas' or 'Rongs' and their Songs. Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, Vol. 12, pp. 41-57. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1899.

Yale: Nk10 +In86 v.11-12

[This brief source contains the texts of nine Lepcha songs, together with the accompanying music for a few of them, as well as the texts of some of the songs in the original script. Waddell begins the work with a short description of Lepcha culture, with caustic comments on the workers who had done transcriptions of the Lepcha language before him. Waddell was a Colonel, presumably in the British Indian Service. --Analyst]

Field date: 1891
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Government Official-5
Processed in 1958

11:Hermanns, Mathias, Fr., The Indo-Tibetans. The Indo-Tibetans and Mongoloid Problem in the Southern Himalaya and North-Northeast India. Bombay: K. L. Fernandes, 1954.

Pp. xvi, 159, 38 plates, one folding map.

Yale: Nkd72 13 954H

[Only pages vii, 27-109 and end plates VIII-XIX of this source have been processed for the Lepcha file.]

[The data in this source is primarily on Lepcha myths, supernatural beings, beliefs in and descriptions of the land of the dead, religious practitioners, religious ceremonies, weapons, houses and domestic animals. Some of the author's culture-historical reconstructions and interpretations may be open to question--Analyst]

Field date: 1951
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1962

Allwein, Eugen. The Passanram and Talung Valleys, Sikkim. The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 5, pp. 58-64. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press for the Himalayan Club, 1933.

Yale: E10 H57 v.5-6

[This is an account of a mountaineering trip through the Passanram and Talung Valleys, the latter the home of the Lepcha. However, it contains no cultural information and has not been processed for the AK5 Lepcha file--Analyst]

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Yale:

[This article, by a former British Superintendent of the Darjeeling area, deals mainly with the Limboos tribe. The Lepcha are mentioned only in passing and no information of value on them is contained in this article. --Analyst]

Donaldson, Florence. Lepcha Land, or Six Weeks in the Sikkim Himalayas. London: Sampson Law, Marston & Co., 1900.

Pp. 213; 106 illustrations, map

Yale: Eefa 891

[This is a travel book by the wife of a British diplomat or administrator, who toured the area with her husband in 1891. It contains incidental information on the Lepcha, marred by an ethnocentric and naive viewpoint. Morris calls it a "period piece" of no ethnographic value. --Analyst]

Macfarlane, Eileen W. Erlanson. Eastern Himalayan Blood-groups. Man, Vol. 37, Article 159, pp. 127-129. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1937.

Yale: Nk10 +M31 v.36-37

[While on a visit to Kalimpong in March 1937, Macfarlane was able to test a small sample of Tibetans, Nepalis, and Lepchas with the results given below:

Table I.
Himalayan Blood Groups

Race and No. of Subjects		Numbers and percentages in Groups			
		O	A	B	AB
Tibetans	56	26	20	7	3
(Macfarlane)		(46.5%)	(35.7%)	(12.5%)	(5.3%)
(Tennant)	187	(14.9%)	(47.1%)	(13.9%)	(24.1%)
Nepalis	78	26	27	18	7
		(33.3%)	(34.6%)	(23.1%)	(9%)
Lepchas	25	6	9	8	2
		(24%)	(36%)	(32%)	(8%)

The reference to Tennant is to a series tested at Gyantse where he found a high percentage of AB among Tibetans--Analyst]

Mainwaring, G. G. A Lepcha Grammar. Calcutta, 1876.

[This source, by a British Colonial officer, is regarded by the recognized specialists on the Lepcha as being of little or no value. Mainwaring believed that the Lepcha were direct descendents from the Garden of Eden and that their language was the original tongue from which all other languages have been derived. --Analyst]

Stocks, C. de Beauvoir. Folklore and Customs of the Lap-chas of Sikkim. Journal of the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Vol. 21, No. 4, 1925

[Miss Stocks, working entirely through an interpreter, collected folklore and some cultural information during two short visits to Sikkim in 1925. Her observations are probably not reliable since they are at complete variance with the reports of Gorer and others. --Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

114 THE literature of Sikkim, scant though it is, is for the most part hidden away in books and articles about Tibet. Of the two books that deal almost exclusively with the former country one is fortunately a masterpiece. I refer to Hooker's *Himalayan Journals*, which was first published in 1854. This is, in my opinion, one of the most delightful books of travel ever written; and one of the most informative. It is still possible to pick up a first edition in the Charing Cross Road for a shilling or two. The other book, Florence Donaldson's *Lepcha Land*, can only be read as a "Period-piece." It contains no information of value.

113 ATTCHISON'S TREATIES. Vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Calcutta, 1892).

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BYRON, ROBERT. *First Russia then Tibet.* (London, 1933.)

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

● 113 *Papers on the Relations with Sikhim and Nepal. The Oriental.* (Jan., 1874.)

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3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in the wall, into which a huge, narrow-woven basket is placed. A beating line is then formed and the fish are driven into the trap.

At a favourable spot, by diverting a river into a channel and then erecting barriers of sand and stone, a small artificial lake is made in the old river bed. Afterwards, huge quantities of *a'ung el* (*Artemisia vulgaris*) are collected, placed into the lake and pounded. Then cut pieces of a strong creeper (*brüng*) are thrown into the pool, and the juice of these plants disolving in the water will poison all the fish which had been trapped in the artificially made lake.

All the catch, obtained by collective methods of fishing, is eventually divided equally among the participants.

NOTES

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2. The rites and beliefs, connected with Lepcha hunting and fishing, will be dealt with later in a separate publication.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

described,[12] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

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5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

113 WADDELL, L. A. : *Among the Himalayas*, London 1890 (Photograph on p. 387)

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TUCCI, G. : *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949 (II, pp. 715, 740, note 33)

Numerous works describing the construction and the use of thread-crosses composed by various Tibetan authors; e.g. the religious compendium of the "Red Hats", in 63 volumes, briefly termed *Rin chhen gter mdzod* contains in the volume *Phi pa* the following treatises:

(1) *g Nas chhos dgongs gter ias dbang phyug ma yi zor mdos khyer bde bar bkod pa bzhugs so*
(2) *gNam chhos mi hgyur rdo rjei dgongs gter dbang phyug zor mdos kyi bka gtad khabs bzhugs so*
(3) *gLing b hi spyi mdos kyi zin bris ra ga a mdzad pa bzhugs so*
(4) *bDe gsheg yongs hbul ias gLing bzhi spyi mdos bzhugs so*
(5) *gLing bzhi spyi mdos kyi las hgrigs*
(6) *Thugs sgrub yang snying hdus pa las/mkha hgro gling bzhi srid pai spyi mdos chhen po zhes bya ba bzhugs so*
(7) *bIe gsheg yongs hdus las/ srid pa khod sryoms kyi mdos bzhugs so*
(8) *gSang bdag dregs pa hdul byed las tshogs dam srii glud mdos zhes bya. ba ghugs so*

000 paintings: Tshangs pa dkar po, r Do rje grags ldan, Tsi ma ra, bSei khrab chan, rDo rje shugs ldan, Kha chhe dmar po and Nam mkha' hbar hdzin. The latter three pictures are works of Lha bris pa dBu chhen mo, the court painter of the next to the last Panchen Lama.

The new acquisitions of the Tibetan collection also contain twenty different Tibetan books and manuscripts, the majority of which are rare works. Among these, the following deserve special mention: an excellently printed ritual book (from the library of the monastery of Tengyeling in Lhasa, which was destroyed in 1912) of the Kun tu bzang po religious dance; further, six different medical works—among these the compendium of Tibetan medicine known as brGyud bzhi, with two rare commentaries for the printing of which a special permit from the Tibetan government must be obtained in each case—various historical and ritual works of the rNying ma pa sect, texts used in the cult of certain oracle divinities and a book that contains directions for performing soothsaying rites.

The spread of instruction in the Tibetan language will be fostered by a series of records spoken in the Lhasa dialect, as well as by tape recordings and records of Lama songs and Tibetan folk songs, dance songs, and wedding songs. A further supplement of the Tibetan collection comprises photographs of Tibetan ethnic types, pictures of the religion dances and rites of the Lamas, and especially a /272/ series of photographs showing all the phases of a soothsaying ceremony performed by a Tibetan oracle priest while in a trance.

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8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--5 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

113 De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R., "Wedding songs of the Lepchas." Asiatische Studien, Vol. VI, 1-4, Zürich, 1952.

2. For a description of the various groups of Lepcha priests, see note 12 of my publication "Ancient funeral ceremonies, etc."

601 materialize in most instances, provided that the son be adequately forewarned. In any event the situation is an awkward one, even though the Lepcha are not reticent about their sexual life. It indicates, perhaps, that the principle of age distinction is not yet fully integrated in a society which in most respects forms a well-knit unit (Gorer does not develop the point).

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113

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1 [For abbreviations, see this source in cat. 113, ALl Southeast Asia ALl - Analyst]

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Foreword and Acknowledgements

*

This study of a primitive tribe suffers from two disadvantages, one inherent in the material, and one personal. The Lepchas are one of a number of mongoloid tribes inhabiting the southern slopes of the Himalayas; since most of the countries in which these tribes live are partially or completely closed to Europeans, there is very little precise information available about this culture area, and consequently many questions of culture contact, which will be inevitably raised in the following account, are at present unanswerable. I myself am not a professional anthropologist, in so far as I have never followed as a student any academic course in anthropology.

As an undergraduate at Cambridge I was much impressed by the work and legend of W. D. H. Rivers, who had died shortly before I became a student, and I followed with very great interest the lectures of Professor Sir William Ridgeway, who died at the end of my second year. But although I found the subject of anthropology an enthralling one, and read all the books I could on the subject, I never at that period of my life considered it feasible that I should myself become an anthropologist. I was at that time more interested in creative writing.

In 1934 I made, almost by chance, a three months' journey in West Africa, a journey undertaken under very favourable conditions; on my return I wrote a book about this journey; and though from the point of view of anthropology it was inevitably so superficial as to be almost worthless, it was indirectly through this book that the present study was made. It was through my book that I made the acquaintance of Major C. J. Morris, late 2nd Bn. 3rd Q.A.O. Gurkha Rifles, and he proposed to me that I should accompany him to India in 1936, after his return from the third Everest expedition; he hoped to make a study of the Gurkhas in their unexplored home in Nepal, but the hoped-for permission to enter

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

that closed land was not forthcoming; so, as an alternative, he got the permission of the Maharajah of Sikkim to study the Lepchas in his country. During the whole of the visit Mr. Morris was my companion, and it was thanks to him that I was able to ignore both the practical and administrative difficulties in a strange land and under strange conditions which would most probably have proved insuperable to me unaided. Through his long-standing friendship with the Maharajah we not only obtained the permission to live indefinitely in Sikkim—a permission not easily obtained—but also his active collaboration in the choice of a site to work in and the co-operation of all the people, official and unofficial, directly or indirectly involved. I find it difficult to express adequately my sense of great indebtedness to Mr. Morris; his knowledge of local customs, both Native and European, were of inestimable help.

It was also through my book *Africa Dances* that I met Dr. Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Ruth Benedict of Columbia University, and Dr. John Dollard, of the Institute of Human Relations, Yale University, New Haven. Under the guidance of Drs. Mead and Benedict I spent the winter of 1935–36 studying the methodology and theoretical background of anthropology, and from Dr. John Dollard I learned to see in focus the interrelated problems of the individual in society. It is quite impossible for me to estimate my intellectual debt to these three inspiring teachers, and I have also to thank them for a very great service; for they undertook the great burden of reading the first draft of this book, commenting on it and advising me on a number of points. The sacrifice of their time by these hard-working people is a gift of inestimable value; my only hope is that this book is, to some slight extent, not altogether unworthy of their pains. If this should happily be so, it is almost entirely owing to their instruction and advice. I must also thank very sincerely Mrs. F. Norman, of the Department of Psychological Medicine, of Guy's Hospital, London, for having read the first draft of this book, advised me upon it, and discussed it with me; her help, particularly in Book Two, has been very great.

I arrived in India at the very end of 1936. Before going into Sikkim I spent two months in Kalimpong studying the Lepcha language with the help of missionised Lepchas. At the end of that period I had an adequate comprehension of the language, but, though I could understand everything that was said with, I think,

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124 I am aware that the use of interpreters is held to invalidate a great deal of anthropological work; but the Lepchas got used to Sukra Singh—a person of endless patience and constant good temper—as soon or sooner than they did to us, and I question whether his absence would have made for any greater intimacy. I was never really dependent on him, and, without his slowing up the pace of conversation, I could never have got the almost word for word texts that I obtained. When he was not with me I found myself quite incapable of taking sufficiently full notes; and those I made from memory subsequently inevitably lacked the clearness and precision of those I took more normally. Unless I had invented some form of Lepcha shorthand or employed a dictaphone my work among the Lepchas would have been far less detailed; only when talking to children or to big groups was the presence of my interpreter useless or a hindrance.

I have put a few notes on the Lepcha language into an appendix[1] for the benefit of those who are interested in such matters and also a vocabulary of those Lepcha words which I have been forced to employ in the text. I have avoided using Lepcha words as far as possible, and have given no Lepcha texts; I am unable to understand the reasoning of those anthropologists who consider that the inclusion in an English book of sentences in a language which not one reader can understand gives the study greater scientific or objective value. My own feeling is that the value of texts is almost entirely linguistic; and so for the use of philologists I propose to deposit a few selected texts (stories and prayers) with my Lepcha vocabulary with the School of Oriental Languages, London.

114 I lived in Zongu among the Lepchas during March, April and May 1937. Frequently in this book, in order to avoid clumsiness, 128 I have used the present tense and referred to different periods as 'now', 'three months ago', 'ten years ago.' In all cases the point of reference from which time is measured is the spring of 1937.

In India and Sikkim I received kindness and help from so many people that it is difficult even to enumerate them all. The many people who have experienced the great and unfailing kindness and hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Odling of Kalimpong will understand that I can find no words to express my gratitude to them; you cannot thank people who have given you a home. I should also like to thank very sincerely His Highness Sir Tashi Namgyal, K.C.I.E., Maharajah of Sikkim, for his kindness and

[1] See Appendix VI.

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of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[6] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[6] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Col. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.

Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

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114 them to rank high among civilised nations, could be engendered amidst the wilds and fastnesses of the Himalayas. They retain, in so marked a degree, all the simple ways of the patriarchs of old, as to lead to the conclusion that they must have remained isolated ever since such customs were in vogue. The type of features indicates that before settling in the Himalayas, they had probably resided in Mongolia and Manchuria and in, or near one of these countries, the body of the people might still be found. The language is a monosyllabic one (though not altogether an isolating one, as it possesses in a degree—as all languages however primitive do—an agglutinative structure) and is unquestionably far anterior to the Hebrew or Sanskrit. It is pre-eminently an *Ursprache*, being probably, and I think, I may without fear of misrepresentations, state it to be, the oldest language extent. It is a most comprehensive and beautiful one; and regarded alone, as a prolific source of the derivations and etyma of words, it is invaluable to the philological world. It however recommends itself to us on higher grounds; it possesses and plainly evinces the principle and motive on which all language is constructed.[5] But like everything really good in this world it has been despised and rejected. To allow the Lepcha race, and the language itself to die out would indeed be most barbarous, and inexpressibly sad.'

Although, or perhaps because, the good General was so conscious of the invaluable qualities of the Lepcha language, he was inclined to be severe with the Lepchas who spoke, to his mind, incorrectly. He constructed a huge grammar on Indo-Germanic principles (Lepcha is an uninflected language with no grammar at all) in which he administers severe reproofs to casual speakers; thus

'The Lepchas are apt to pronounce o as u, and hence when writing to confound it with u; this error should be avoided and corrected in the Lepchas.'

'Different local pronunciations, however, and often ignorance, etc., render the change, in the first syllable of dissyllabic words, very common, and sometimes, very irregular; this disorganising tendency should be, altogether, discouraged; and the proper

[5] *Note by Gen. Mainwaring*: In the structure of the Lepcha language I have discovered the system on which, I consider, all language is based. By an exegesis which I have, in part, prepared (combined with a diagram showing the rudimental power of letters), the root and true signification of all words in all languages, are, at once, apparent.

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prefixed syllable, when decided upon, should be adhered to. The principle should be laid down as a canon, and systematically impressed on the Lepchas.'

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The General was so occupied with his teaching—he founded a sort of college for Lepchas near Darjeeling—that he died before he had time to publish The Power of Letters, and the Lepcha dictionary which was to illustrate his points. After his death his manuscript was edited and published by a German Tibetan scholar who knew no Lepcha and not too much English; all the General's fantastic etymological derivations were cut out and the Lepcha script abandoned in favour of an almost incomprehensible system of phonetic transliteration. The government official in charge wrote to Herr Grünwedel 'The so-called Lepcha alphabet used by General Mainwaring is a pure fiction. The language has properly speaking no written character, though it is possible that on a few occasions a debased variety of the Tibetan character may have been resorted to. There is however no necessity whatever and no real justification for incurring the expense of starting Lepcha type, nor as a matter of fact can a complete fount of such type be constructed.' Considering that there were then numerous Lepcha books in manuscript in existence, and that the Baptists had already founded a complete Lepcha type, the instructions are, in a small way, a fine example of Imperial diplomacy. The dictionary is almost entirely Lepcha-English, and is chiefly useful for its indication of Tibetan loan-words; the identifications of plants and animals are in many cases questionable.

As far as I know the only other person who has paid more than passing attention to the Lepchas is Miss C. de Beauvoir Stocks, who made two tours in Sikkim in 1925 to collect folktales; she spent three days in Lingthem. I came across a number of the stories Miss Stocks had printed[6] and though many of them had been bowdlerised almost out of recognition (probably through the prudery of her interpreter) the almost word-for-word similarity of passages of no particular dramatic interest was striking. Miss Stocks also added some notes on Lepcha customs which correspond in practically no particular with my observations; many are the same as those made about the Sikkimese in the *Gazeteer of Sikkim*.

[6] 'Folklore and Customs of the Lap-chas of Sikkim.' By C. de Beauvoir Stocks. From the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New Series), Vol. XXI, 1925, No. 4.

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as good as another. Although the two places are so near in 181
terms of modern travel, in everything else Talung is thousands of years behind, looked at, that is, from what our unhappy machine-age (but actually slave-driven) civilisation is pleased to regard as progress. Talung has neither drains nor electric light; nor, more fortunately, any newspapers; but its inhabitants are happy and, all things considered, contented. A few, a very few, of the people had heard vague and distorted rumours of the Great War (that which did not end war): none, however, so far as I know, had heard of India's new constitution, nor even of King George the Sixth, and the day of the Coronation passed unnoticed, except in so far as it was a fine day and so permitted a full day's work in the fields.

My first view of the Talung was in the spring of 1936, on 114
the way to Everest. We did not enter the valley since our 133
road lay straight through Sikkim to the plains of Tibet, and there was no time for excursions off the route. But from Singhik bungalow one looks right up the valley to Kinchinjunga at its head, one of the most spectacular sights in the whole Himalaya. But on this occasion we did not see the mountain, which was hidden in cloud, and the valley itself looked grim and uninviting, with patches of winter snow still lying in the shadier parts of the higher slopes. When we returned in July the valley was deep in mist and filled with small clouds which looked like floating wads of cotton-wool; but even at this distance many shining patches of emerald cultivation were clearly visible on the steep hillsides, although we could see no villages.

During the previous autumn I had been staying in Nepal, 114
hoping, amongst other things, to get permission to round off my ethnological studies of the people (which I had been pursuing intermittently for years) by a stay of some months in an actual Gurkha village. My proposals proved unacceptable to the Maharaja, who found it impossible to make any exception to the rule, laid down by his predecessors and never once relaxed, by which no European is permitted to

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114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other 144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans 177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of 619 tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with 609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

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resenting the intrusion of strangers. He told me that a few 114 years ago, during an epidemic of small-pox, he had sent a 609 vaccinator across to the valley in order to afford the people protection from the disease. But as soon as the man crossed the bridge the people fled from their houses and took to the forest, only returning when he became tired of waiting and went back to Gangtok. So far as I was concerned this story only added zest to the chase; and before leaving for England I arranged to return to Sikkim in the following spring.

On a previous occasion when I was in England, in 1934 I 114 think it was, I had met Geoffrey Gorer at the house of a mutual friend, and we had carried on an intermittent correspondence ever since. In the meantime he had spent some months in America, and while there had met Dr. Ruth Benedict, whose remarkable *Patterns of Culture* has influenced many of the younger and more open-minded ethnologists. As a result of working both with her and with Dr. Margaret Mead, the best-known exponent of her ideas, Geoffrey decided that he wanted to see for himself just exactly what field ethnology was all about, so I said he could come and help me, little thinking that he would accept. We were, now that I come to think of it, a most oddly assorted couple: Geoffrey, a self-acknowledged gourmet, and never really happy when too long away from the centre of things; and I, who can hardly tell the difference between caviare and tinned salmon, and to whom civilisation (so called) is a thing to be escaped from at all costs for as long and as often as possible. Also, according to Geoffrey, I have strong masochistic tendencies; and since I am passionately devoted to mountains and mountaineering a well-developed "death wish"; but in his view nearly all violent exercise is merely a method of punishing oneself. Before taking to ethnology I had been for nearly twenty years in the regular army; but as for this it was, in Geoffrey's words, "only occasionally apparent." Actually, all this boils down to the fact that he belongs to that post-war generation to whom (quite rightly) freedom of every sort is all, whereas I grew up in an earlier

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114 age and was taught to believe that a measure of self-discipline was good for the soul. We never had a quarrel, but doubtless got on one another's nerves from time to time. In view of the fact that our life in Sikkim alternated between intense hard work and complete but unavoidable boredom this was almost inevitable.

114 These personal details would normally be of no interest to
121 anyone but our own selves. I have inserted them here, however, because, to me at least, it seems important in reading a description of a foreign culture to know how the writer fits into his own. It is almost impossible (and would be extremely dull) to describe the customs of a people entirely objectively; and so it follows that my description of Lepcha home life is inevitably coloured, and possibly limited, by my own outlook. I have concentrated on the things that interested me. Fortunately for us both, Geoffrey was interested mostly in other aspects and is writing a psychological study of the people from the Freudian and Marxist points of view. Our two books, therefore, while dealing (more or less) with the same subject, will have little in common; and in addition I have drawn on my notes and memories of previous journeys in Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet.

121 According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ethnography is the "scientific description of races of men." I can make no such claim for the following account, which, although the
[122] work was carried out under the auspices of the William Wyse Foundation (University of Cambridge), which awarded me its studentship in Social Anthropology, pretends to be no more than a plain unvarnished description of some four months' residence in a Lepcha village. It is not intended for experts and assumes no previous knowledge. The "scientific description" of the culture as a whole, in which we hope to collaborate, may possibly follow later, but will not be ready for some considerable time.

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000 On arrival at Madras, which an Indian writer, Mr. R. K. Narayan, describes as "hot for ten months of the year and hotter for two," we found a railway strike in progress; and since there was no boat on to Calcutta for a week after our arrival we did not reach that place until the last day of December. There was nothing to detain us in Calcutta except the fine collection of Indian paintings and sculpture in the museum, and for that a full morning was sufficient. There is nothing of architectural interest in the city, unless one includes the recently-completed Victoria Memorial. Of this it is reported that a famous continental architect burst into tears as soon as he beheld it: "What a pity," he said; "and such lovely material!"

Near Government House there are a number of bronze statues of retired viceroys. Once, when I was passing through Calcutta, I had with me a Gurkha orderly, and to pass the time before our train left in the evening I took him all over the city. The only thing that really interested him was this double row of defunct pro-Consuls, to which he asked to be
G taken a second time. I asked him why. "Well," he said,
[565 "with us, you know, a dark skin is a sign of inferior birth;
826] but you people, you bring out great men from England to rule the country and then put up statues which show them with black faces: or is it that they go that colour when they die?"

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114 After a month or so in Kalimpong, during which we struggled each morning with the intricacies of Lepcha grammar, we left for Gangtok, travelling on foot in order to give Geoffrey a chance to see something of the country, which was new to him. As a concession to his hedonistic tendencies I agreed to keep on our cook, who demanded (and obtained) the unheard-of wage of fifty-five rupees a month. I had never before travelled in such luxury, usually contenting myself with one general drudge-of-all-work and the absolute minimum of cooking apparatus. This time,

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however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, [191
Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke 797]
Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534
earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

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114 horribly familiar strains of "Abide with me," slightly out of
124 tune, issuing from the house next door in which he and the servants lived. I never made any effort to restrain him, for which I hope to receive due credit in any future existence which may be my lot.

Sukra Sing was what in India is technically known as a "compounder," which means that he had worked in a hospital for some months, knew a certain amount (in his case a dangerous amount) of simple doctoring and first-aid methods, and was authorised to "compound," or make up medicines to prescription, without, however, being responsible if he inadvertently confused aconite with aqua. He
[797] was also under training as a missionary and was working under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries are rightly interested less in obtaining "scalps" than in improving the people's condition, the only possible excuse, in my opinion, for missionary work amongst primitive peoples. I shall have more to say about missionary activities later on in this book; but in the meantime I cannot help thinking that Sukra Sing will now go out into the field with considerably more tolerance for his "uncivilised" Lepcha brethren than would otherwise have been the case. He was fortunately not musical, but showed signs towards the end of our stay of a wakening interest in the flute. Dhawa, however, preferred to play solo.

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114 We left Gangtok without any very clear idea of our exact
636 destination. His Highness had suggested Jongu as being the most suitable place in which to commence our studies; and so to Jongu we set off. No one was quite sure of the exact position of this place; nor was the Ordnance Survey map helpful, for it omitted all trace of this, to us at least, important place. On arrival at Mangen, however, where we were to leave the main trade route through Sikkim, the mystery was solved, for it there transpired that Jongu was not a village but a district; a district, moreover, which stretched from roughly

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114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

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I suspect that geologists would find this explanation unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

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346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

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APPENDIX 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

114 THE literature of Sikkim, scant though it is, is for the most part hidden away in books and articles about Tibet. Of the two books that deal almost exclusively with the former country one is fortunately a masterpiece. I refer to Hooker's *Himalayan Journals*, which was first published in 1854. This is, in my opinion, one of the most delightful books of travel ever written; and one of the most informative. It is still possible to pick up a first edition in the Charing Cross Road for a shilling or two. The other book, Florence Donaldson's *Lepcha Land*, can only be read as a "Period-piece." It contains no information of value.

113 AITCHISON'S TREATIES. Vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Calcutta, 1892).

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6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

Anthropos. Volume 48 (1953)

/889/ The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower

By René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

Contents:

1. First Version
2. Second Version
3. Explanations
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●114 Part of the legendary material of the peoples living in the maharajah state of Sikkim at the foot of the Central Himalayas has already been treated by various people, and also a number of traditions of the Lepchas—the largest group of the original inhabitants of this territory—have been mentioned in numerous publications. (1)

1. Cf. Kali Kumar Das, "The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell," Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) Volume VI (1896). —C. de Beauvoir-Stocks, "Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikhim," Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21 (1925). — G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London, 1938). — J. Morris, Living with Lepchas (London, 1938).

114 TB Singularly enough, however, one of the legends best known among the Lepchas has not received—with the exception of two brief references—closer treatment in any of the pertinent works that have appeared to date: this is a tradition that tells of the unsuccessful project of the Lepcha people to construct a tower of clay pots reaching the vault of heaven.

172 114 One of the reasons for the survival of this legend is the circumstance that at the supposed site of the tower potsherds have been dug

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the
172 fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

[Lepcha text follows.] (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 614 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

914 614 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly publications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 539 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

114 323 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepchas which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other [437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas. [415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyŏk generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 764 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER V.

View from Mr. Hodgson's of range of snowy mountains—Their extent and elevation—Delusive appearance of elevation—Sinchul, view from and vegetation of—Chumulari—Magnolias, white and purple—Rhododendron Dalhousiæ, arboreum and argenteum—Natives of Dorjiling—Lepchas, origin, tradition of flood, morals, dress, arms, ornaments, diet—cups, origin and value—Marriages—Diseases—Burial—Worship and religion—Bijooas—Kampa Rong, or Arratt—Limboos, origin, habits, language, &c.—Moormis—Magras—Mechis—Comparison of customs with those of the natives of Assam, Khasia, &c.

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114 THE summer, or rainy season of 1848, was passed at or near Dorjiling, during which period I chiefly occupied myself in forming collections, and in taking meteorological observations. I resided at Mr Hodgson's for the greater part of the time, in consequence of his having given me a hospitable invitation to consider his house my home. The view from his windows is one quite unparalleled for the scenery it embraces, commanding confessedly the grandest known landscape of snowy mountains in the Himalaya, and hence in the world.* Kinchinjunga (forty-five miles distant) is the prominent object, rising 21,000 feet above the level of the observer out of a sea of intervening wooded hills; whilst, on a line with its snows, the eye descends below the horizon, to a narrow gulf 7000 feet deep in the mountains, where the Great Rungeet, white with foam, threads a tropical forest with a silver line.

[p. 122]

* For an account of the geography of these regions, and the relation of the Sikkim Himalaya to Tibet, &c., see Appendix.

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Archiv für Völkerkunde

Volume VIII (1953)

/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

914 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

9: Risley G-5 (1886-1888) 1891
AK5 Lepcha AK5

PREFACE

THE measurements recorded in these volumes were taken under my supervision in Bengal, the North-Western Provinces and the Panjab during 1886 and the two following years. The instruments used were those contained in the *boîte anthropométrique* recommended by Professor Paul Topinard in his *Éléments d'Anthropologie Générale*, with the addition of the goniometer devised by him for measuring the facial angle of Cuvier. With a single exception, Professor Topinard's methods of measuring and of calculating indices were followed throughout. The exception is the naso-malar index, the data for which were measured and the index calculated in the manner described by Mr. Oldfield Thomas in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland for May 1885.

My cordial acknowledgments are due to Mr. J. C. Nesfield, Inspector of Schools, Oudh, for supervising the measurements taken in the North-West Provinces; to Chandi Singh, Clerk in the office of the Inspector of Schools, Oudh, for carrying out those measurements; to Alá-uddin, Civil Hospital Assistant, Lahore, for the measurements taken by him for the Panjab; and especially to Babu Kumud Behari Sámanta, Civil Hospital Assistant, for the large series of measurements taken by him in Bengal, and for his labours in calculating indices and averages, and in making a variety of ethnographic inquiries for me.

A full analysis of the measurements, indicating their bearing upon the ethnology of Northern India, and also upon certain more general questions which have been discussed by ethnologists in Europe, will be given in a separate volume.

[following title page]

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE 'LEPCHAS' OR 'RONGS' AND THEIR SONGS

BY

L. A. WADDELL, LL.D.

114

The 'Lepchas' or 'Rongs', are the wild Mongoloid aborigenes of Sikhim, a mountainous tract, about 8000 square miles in extent, in the south-eastern Himalayas, which is wedged in between Nepal on the west, Bhotan on the east, Tibet on the north, and the plains of Bengal on the south. These people are particularly interesting, as they are amongst the least civilized of all the Himalayan tribes [1]). They have preserved intact their tribal language and many of their primitive savage customs, on account of the peculiarly isolated position of their rugged country — shut in as it is by high wall-like ridges from Nepal and Bhotan, by the everlasting snows from Tibet, and by the deadly belt of *Tarai* jungle from the Indian plains. But they are now, however, fast dying out [2]), and losing their identity by intermarriage with the swarms of more civilized Nepalese and Tibetans who have lately swept into their country, and especially so since it has been opened up under British rule; but neither their language or customs have yet been fully recorded, nor have their ethnological affinities been clearly ascertained.

Having lived amongst these people for several years in Darjiling and in their forest homes, I here attempt to rescue from oblivion some of their songs — a subject on which nothing has hitherto been published. This I do at the request of Professor A. GRÜNWEDEL, who has already in the T'oung-Pao [3]) published a small dictionary of their speech, which he compiled from some missionary tracts, and the Lepcha Grammar of the late Mr. MAINWARING [4]); and he is at present editing Mr. MAINWARING's large manuscript: Lepcha-English Dictionary. My anthropometric and ethnographic materials bearing on the racial affinities of this tribe are too bulky to be included in the present paper. Here it may be sufficient to mention that the results of my observations are in many ways

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1) Except those in the extreme east, in Assam.
2) The pure Lepchas now (1896) number only a few thousands, and their language is likely to become extinct in two or three generations.
3) In 1892. Also a short Lepcha text in 1896, 526—60, and another in Bastian's Festschrift, Berlin 1896.
4) Grammar of the Rong or Lepcha. Calcutta 1876.

[p. 41]

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 opposed to the views of Mr. RISLEY [1]), Colonel DALTON [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers Drs. CAMPBELL and HOOKER, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. HOFFMANN).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1869, IV. p. 5.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]. They are especially near the 'Arieng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pó* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Forsam, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all. 114 174

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapche' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2], because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mö-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Ialaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu. 101

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3], is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4] by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He 212 114

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[1] From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of *naked hill-savages* (*Naga*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Naga*s is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2] It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ‚Welsh' or ‚the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ‚Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. TAYLOR's ‚Names and Places', London, p. 67.

[3] The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikkim'.

[4] This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. PAUL (pp. 1—88), where it will be found at page 12 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1686, died 1717 A. D.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitra-
194 rily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rim* or *Rdim*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Reem*'. Again *Tak* or *Tiak* 'the head' is never pronounced *Tak* or *T'yak* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-no* 'a king'. Similarly *Kup* 'young', *Sak-dum*, 'world', *Sa-nil* 'a bear', *Mawe or Mée* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-ber*' a musk-deer; *Pak-o'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yak-mum* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Sak-dum*, *Sa-no*, *Mén*, *Hlo*, *Kyong*, *Sa-ber*, *Pak-ook*, *Yak-mum*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced ‚*Rudim*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 288; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 168). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GAUWERNEZ, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppiha Jitaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter
[104] ä, and ch for c.

192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riák-bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha
192 book, the *Tashi-sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words
114 freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

533 The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by
192 the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

101 One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the
192 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi' Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*Sa-ed-tep*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*p'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former in the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-deb*, to make a request. Cf. JASCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 8th ed. II. 275.

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [153]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [161]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

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114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes : "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex ;
it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour ; it is regarded as almost as essential as food.
Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost
impersonal ; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal
relationships passionately adhered to between sexual part-
ners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts
114 and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
562 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 168 sq.

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in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

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List of the Inhabitants of Lingthem

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NOTE: This is a list of the inhabitants of Lingthem mentioned in the text and is made to avoid the constant repetition of age, sex, social position and chief relationships in the body of the text. This list is not exhaustive, and only the chief operative relationships are named; further relationships can, if desired, be discovered by inspection of Appendix I, Table 4. Those people most often mentioned in the text have their names printed in capitals. The following social classifications, which are fully elucidated in the text, are used: Muktair, Mandal, *youmi*, *gyapön* are village officials (see Chapter Five); lama and nun are priests of the lamaist religion (see Chapter Seven); *Mun*, *padem*, *Nandjému* are priests of the old Lepcha religion (see Chapter Eight).

The number immediately after the name is the age in years of the person in 1937. Women are designated either by the prefix 'Mrs.' when they are listed immediately under their husband, or by feminine kinship terms. The following abbreviations have been used:

Kinship term in quotes—e.g. 'grandfather'—signifies that the relationship is classificatory and operative.

d.r. signifies 'distantly related to' in those cases where a distant relationship is socially operative.

Ph. pl. followed by a number signifies that there is a photograph of the person mentioned on the plate of that number. Some people appear in several photographs, but only one is given.

Adér, 71. 'Grandfather' of Chano, Chinya, Aga (Ph. pl. 25a).
Aga, 37. Son of Hlatam, 'brother' of Chano, Chinya.
Mrs. Aga I, 37. Mother of three children.
Mrs. Aga II, 43. Sterile widow, should be wife of Zumba.
Agyung, 29. Adopted son of Serving. Married with one son.
Aplung, 29. Brother of Rigya and Gyatso. Son of Ashyok *youmi*.
Mrs. Aplung, 35. Formerly stepmother of Tobgé.
Ashyok *youmi*, 50. Father of Rigya, Gyatso, Aplung (Ph. pl. 11e).
Atyook, 16. Adopted son of Tingkep *youmi*, real son of Ongden, q.v. (Ph. pl. 30).

Bahada, 23, carpenter. Son of Ongden, brother of Chanko, Atyook, Kanchok.

CHALA MANDAL, 59. Head of village (Ph. pl. 7).
Mrs. Mandal I, 28, nun. Sterile. d.r. Chélé's wife, Dadool, Kanden (Ph. pl. 19).

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Mrs. Mandal II, 36. Has one daughter, formerly wife of Katel's son (Ph. pl. 19).

CHANO, 31, lama. Widower, married to elder brother's wife; 'father' of Mikmar, Pursang; 'brother' of Aga, Chinya (Ph. pl. 31a).

Mrs. Chano, 32, possessed by Mun (Ph. pl. 19b).

Chanko, 29, lama. Eldest son Ongden, brother of Atyook, Kanchok. Married.

CHÉLÉ, 10. Grandson of Kahlyeu. Inherited uncle's wife (Ph. pl. 9a).

Chelim, 46. 'Brother' of Ongden; adopted child. Has adopted Kanchok as his son.

CHIMPET, 14. Eldest son of Tafoor, q.v. (Ph. pl. 12b) training as lama.

Chinya, 37. 'Brother' of Aga, Chano (Ph. pl. 24b).

Mrs. Chinya, 41. Sterile.

CHUDO, 29, lama. Brother of Tafoor. Has three children, eldest boy training as lama (Ph. pl. 12a); Chudo (Ph. pl. 22a).

Mrs. Chudo, 29.

Lharibu (painter), Chujen of Panung (next village), lama. Father-in-law of Tafoor (Ph. pl. 11d).

Dadool, 23. Son of Také, brother of Kanden. Carrying on an intrigue with Mrs. Tobgé (Ph. pl. 26a).

Mrs. Dadool, 23.

DATOOP, 56, lama. Son of first Dorjé Lapoon, father of Pembu, Pichi, Kolok Tyong. d.r. Tafoor, Chudo, Pargeut (Ph. pl. 29).

MRS. DATOOP, 49, nun. d.r. Kurma (Ph. pl. 28b).

First Dorjé Lapoon, 82, lama. Father of Datoop, q.v.

SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON, 69, lama. 'Father' of Tafoor, Chudo, Recently married Pumri (Ph. pl. 11c).

Dunbi, 62. 'Brother' of Muktair, Tafoor's father. Father of Prumtu, Pankek.

MRS. DUNBI (Tafoormu), 54. Formerly married to Muktair. Mother of Tafoor, Chudo, Prumtu, Pankek.

GONGYOP, 47, *Mun*. Brother of Thyak Thimbu, paternal uncle Sangkyar, Satéo (Ph. pl. 14).

Mrs. Gongyop, 41 (Ph. pl. 19b).

Gongyop's son, 18. Betrothed (Ph. pl. 24b).

Gyatso, carpenter, 20. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung Nariya.

HLATAM, 67, nun. The 'poisoner,' mother of Aga.

Itup, 31. Son of Takneum *youmi*. Married.

JIROONG, 41, lama. Uncle of Tobgé. d.r. Pongring (Ph. pl. 30).

MRS. JIROONG, 28. Sister of Tempa (Ph. pl. 30).

KAHLYEU, 77. Grandfather of Chélé (Ph. pl. 15b).

Kaji, 59. Old man who sees devils.

Mrs. Kaji, 37, *Mun*. Sister of Jiroong, aunt of Tobgé.

Kanchok, 17. Adopted son of Chelim, son of Ongden (q.v.).

KANDEN, 25, defective. Son of Také, brother of Dadool (Ph. pl. 26b).

KATEL, 55, *Mun*. (Ph. pl. 16).

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Mrs. Katel I, 56. Mother of three children. d.r. Chala Mandal.
Mrs. Katel II, 18.
Kolok Tyong, 15. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29).
KONDÉ, 16. Daughter of Pargeut. d.r. Datoop, Tafoor (Ph. pl. 29).
KURMA, *gyupön, padem*, 37. d.r. Mrs. Datoop (Ph. pl. 27).
Kutt'r, 18, lama. Son of Lumba (Ph. pl. 13b).

Lumba *chizhembu*, 51, lama. Father of Kutt'r (Ph. pl. 11a).
Mrs. Lumba I, 47, *Mun*. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Tempa.
Mrs. Lumba II, 38. d.r. Mrs. Lumba I, q.v.

Mikmar, 13. Son of Chano, brother of Pursang; betrothed, studying to be a lama (Ph. pl. 24).
MUKTAIR. Dead father of Tafoor, Chudo; first husband of Mrs. Dunbi.

Nahyeun, 41. Bastard son of Dunbi.
Nandjému, 66. Elder grandmother of Patek.
NARIYA, 30. Adoptive brother of Rigya, son of elder brother of Ashyok *youmi*.
Mrs. Nariya, 14.

Ongden, 52, lama. Father of Chanko, Bahada, Kanchok, Atyook; brother of Tinkep; 'brother' of Chelim (Ph. pl. 25a).
Mrs. Ongden, 22. Widow, very recently married to Ongden.

Pankek, 6. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi (Ph. pl. 21a).
Pargeut, 44. Father of Kondé, Tangvoong, old mother a nun, d.r. Datoop, Tafoor.
Mrs. Pargeut, 38.
PATEK, 17. Head of household of six, including two grandmothers, a *Nandjému* and a *Mun*; brother of Ribu (Ph. pl. 9b).
PEMBU, 29, lama. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29), father of Dugoo.
Mrs. Pembu, 23. (Ph. pl. 29).
Pichi, 23. Son of Datoop, brother of Pembu, carpenter (Ph. pl. 28a).
Pongring, 83, lama. Monastery custodian. d.r. Jiroong (Ph. pl. 9b).
PRUMTU, 15. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi, lives with half-brothers Tafoor and Chudo.
PUMRI, 74, *Mun*. Mother of Mrs. Lumba I, Mrs. Tempa. Recently married second Dorjé Lapoon, being widow of his "uncle" (Ph. pl. 15b).
Pursang, 11. 'Son' of Chano, brother of Mikmar.

Ribu, 12. Brother of Patek, q.v.
RIGYA, 23. 'Brother' of Nariya, whose parents adopted him. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung, Gyatso (Ph. pl. 26a).
Mrs. Rigya, 26.

Samblyou, 60. Sister of Mrs. Takal and Mrs. Gongyop, a promiscuous woman at present living with Zumba.
SANGKYAR, 36, a cretinous defective. Brother of Satéo, nephew of Gongyop and Thyak Thimbu, with latter of whom he lives.
Satéo, 27, a cripple. Brother of Sangkyar, q.v. lives with Chala Mandal (Ph. pl. 17b).

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Seryop Katoo, 17. Bastard son of Itup, q.v., born when his father was only 13.

SERVING, 90. Oldest man of Lingthem, descendant of former village heads. Adopted Agyung, grandson of elder brother (Ph. pl. 8a).

Songpo *youmi*, 67. d.r. Také, Kanden, Dadool.

Mrs. Songpo, 66, nun.

TAFOOR, 35, lama. Father of Chimpet and three daughters, brother of Chudo, 'son' of second Dorjé Lapoon, 'nephew' of Dunbi, 'brother' of Datoop (Ph. pl. 23).

MRS. TAFOOR, 31, nun. Daughter of Lharibu Chujen (Ph.pl. 22b).

Takal. 57, lama.

Mrs. Takal, 58, nun. Sister of Samblyou and Mrs. Gongyop, promiscuous.

Takneum *youmi*, 60. Adopted as a boy by his father's sister, father of Itup. Mother living, 84, nun (Ph. pl. 8b).

Takshyom, 19. Nephew of Kurma.

Tangvoong, 12. Daughter of Pargeut, sister of Kondé.

TEMPA, 44. Stranger to Zongu, married Pumri's daughter (Ph. pl. 7b).

Mrs. Tempa, 44. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Lumba I. Three daughters surviving.

Thyak Thimbu, 49, *Mun*. Brother of Gongyop, uncle of Satéo and Sangkyar. Has two wives.

Tingkep *gyapön*, 35. Brother of Ongden, q.v. Adopted Ongden's son, Atyook. His wife bore a child 1934.

TOBGÉ, 22. Son of elder brother of Jiroong with whom he lives (Ph. pl. 6a).

Mrs. Tobgé, 25. d.r. Mrs. Jiroong and Tempa.

Zumba, 48. Living with Samblyou. d.r. Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu.

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Himalayan Village

an account
of

The Lepchas of Sikkim

With an Introduction by
J. H. HUTTON, M.A., D.SC.(OXON), C.I.E.
William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge

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PLATE 1

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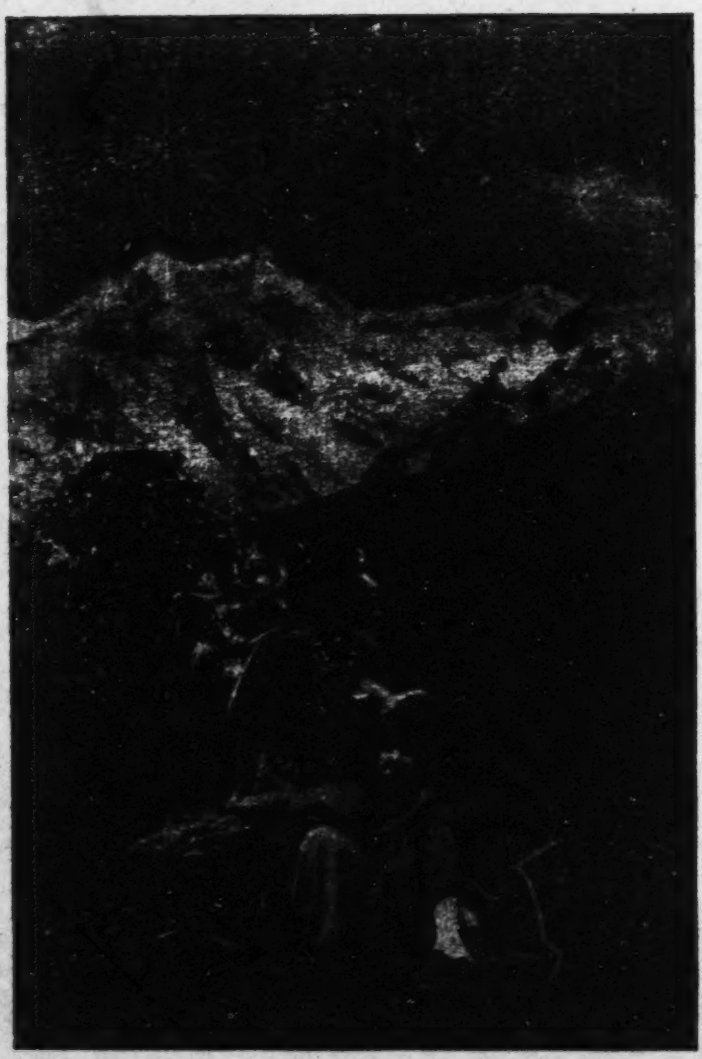

MRS. TAFOOR NURSING HER YOUNGEST DAUGHTER:
BEHIND KINCHENJUNGA

[Frontispiece]
[Facing p. 5]

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List of the Inhabitants of Lingthem

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NOTE: This is a list of the inhabitants of Lingthem mentioned in the text and is made to avoid the constant repetition of age, sex, social position and chief relationships in the body of the text. This list is not exhaustive, and only the chief operative relationships are named; further relationships can, if desired, be discovered by inspection of Appendix I, Table 4. Those people most often mentioned in the text have their names printed in capitals. The following social classifications, which are fully elucidated in the text, are used: Muktair, Mandal, *youmi*, *gyapôn* are village officials (see Chapter Five); lama and nun are priests of the lamaist religion (see Chapter Seven); *Mun*, *padem*, *Nandjému* are priests of the old Lepcha religion (see Chapter Eight).

The number immediately after the name is the age in years of the person in 1937. Women are designated either by the prefix 'Mrs.' when they are listed immediately under their husband, or by feminine kinship terms. The following abbreviations have been used:

Kinship term in quotes—e.g. 'grandfather'—signifies that the relationship is classificatory and operative.

d.r. signifies 'distantly related to' in those cases where a distant relationship is socially operative.

Ph. pl. followed by a number signifies that there is a photograph of the person mentioned on the plate of that number. Some people appear in several photographs, but only one is given.

Adér, 71. 'Grandfather' of Chano, Chinya, Aga (Ph. pl. 25a).
Aga, 37. Son of Hlatam, 'brother' of Chano, Chinya.
Mrs. Aga I, 37. Mother of three children.
Mrs. Aga II, 43. Sterile widow, should be wife of Zumba.
Agyung, 29. Adopted son of Serving. Married with one son.
Aplung, 29. Brother of Rigya and Gyatso. Son of Ashyok *youmi*.
Mrs. Aplung, 35. Formerly stepmother of Tobgé.
Ashyok *youmi*, 50. Father of Rigya, Gyatso, Aplung (Ph. pl. 11e).
Atyook, 16. Adopted son of Tingkep *youmi*, real son of Ongden, q.v. (Ph. pl. 30).

Balada, 23, carpenter. Son of Ongden, brother of Chanko, Atyook, Kanchok.

CHALA MANDAL, 59. Head of village (Ph. pl. 7).
Mrs. Mandal I, 28, nun. Sterile. d.r. Chélé's wife, Dadool, Kanden (Ph. pl. 19).

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Mrs. Mandal II, 36. Has one daughter, formerly wife of Katel's son (Ph. pl. 19).

CHANO, 31, lama. Widower, married to elder brother's wife; 'father' of Mikmar, Pursang; 'brother' of Aga, Chinya (Ph. pl. 31a).

Mrs. Chano, 32, possessed by Mun (Ph. pl. 19b).

Chanko, 29, lama. Eldest son Ongden, brother of Atyook, Kanchok. Married.

CHÉLÉ, 10. Grandson of Kahlyeu. Inherited uncle's wife (Ph. pl. 9a).

Chelim, 46. 'Brother' of Ongden; adopted child. Has adopted Kanchok as his son.

CHIMPET, 14. Eldest son of Tafoor, q.v. (Ph. pl. 12b) training as lama.

Chinya, 37. 'Brother' of Aga, Chano (Ph. pl. 24b).

Mrs. Chinya, 41. Sterile.

CHUDO, 29, lama. Brother of Tafoor. Has three children, eldest boy training as lama (Ph. pl. 12a); Chudo (Ph. pl. 22a).

Mrs. Chudo, 29.

Lharibu (painter), Chujen of Panung (next village), lama. Father-in-law of Tafoor (Ph. pl. 11d).

Dadool, 23. Son of Také, brother of Kanden. Carrying on an intrigue with Mrs. Tobgé (Ph. pl. 26a).

Mrs. Dadool, 23.

DATOOP, 56, lama. Son of first Dorjé Lapoon, father of Pembu, Pichi, Kolok Tyong. d.r. Tafoor, Chudo, Pargeut (Ph. pl. 29).

MRS. DATOOP, 49, nun. d.r. Kurma (Ph. pl. 28b).

First Dorjé Lapoon, 82, lama. Father of Datoop, q.v.

SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON, 69, lama. 'Father' of Tafoor, Chudo, Recently married Pumri (Ph. pl. 11c).

Dunbi, 62. 'Brother' of Muktair, Tafoor's father. Father of Prumtu, Pankek.

MRS. DUNBI (Tafoormu), 54. Formerly married to Muktair. Mother of Tafoor, Chudo, Prumtu, Pankek.

GONGYOP, 47, *Mun*. Brother of Thyak Thimbu, paternal uncle Sangkyar, Satéo (Ph. pl. 14).

Mrs. Gongyop, 41 (Ph. pl. 19b).

Gongyop's son, 18. Betrothed (Ph. pl. 24b).

Gyatso, carpenter, 20. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung Nariya.

HLATAM, 67, nun. The 'poisoner,' mother of Aga.

Iiup, 31. Son of Takneum *youmi*. Married.

JIROONG, 41, lama. Uncle of Tobgé. d.r. Pongring (Ph. pl. 30).

MRS. JIROONG, 28. Sister of Tempa (Ph. pl. 30).

KAHLYEU, 77. Grandfather of Chélé (Ph. pl. 15b).

Kaji, 59. Old man who sees devils.

Mrs. Kaji, 37, *Mun*. Sister of Jiroong, aunt of Tobgé.

Kanchok, 17. Adopted son of Chelim, son of Ongden (q.v.).

KANDEN, 25, defective. Son of Také, brother of Dadool (Ph. pl. 26b).

KATEL, 55, *Mun*. (Ph. pl. 16).

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Mrs. Katel I, 56. Mother of three children. d.r. Chala Mandal.
Mrs. Katel II, 18.
Kolok Tyong, 15. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29).
KONDÉ, 16. Daughter of Pargeut. d.r. Datoop, Tafoor (Ph. pl. 29).
KURMA, *gyapōn, padem*, 37. d.r. Mrs. Datoop (Ph. pl. 27).
Kutt'r, 18, lama. Son of Lumba (Ph. pl. 13b).

Lumba *chithembu*, 51, lama. Father of Kutt'r (Ph. pl. 11a).
Mrs. Lumba I, 47, *Mun*. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Tempa.
Mrs. Lumba II, 38. d.r. Mrs. Lumba I, q.v.

Mikmar, 13. Son of Chano, brother of Pursang; betrothed, studying to be a lama (Ph. pl. 24).
MUKTAIR. Dead father of Tafoor, Chudo; first husband of Mrs. Dunbi.

Nahyeun, 41. Bastard son of Dunbi.
Nandjému, 66. Elder grandmother of Patek.
NARIYA, 30. Adoptive brother of Rigya, son of elder brother of Ashyok *youmi*.
Mrs. Nariya, 14.

Ongden, 52, lama. Father of Chanko, Bahada, Kanchok, Atyook; brother of Tinkep; 'brother' of Chelim (Ph. pl. 25a).
Mrs. Ongden, 22. Widow, very recently married to Ongden.

Pankek, 6. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi (Ph. pl. 21a).
Pargeut, 44. Father of Kondé, Tangvoong, old mother a nun, d.r. Datoop, Tafoor.
Mrs. Pargeut, 38.
PATEK, 17. Head of household of six, including two grandmothers, a *Nandjému* and a *Mun*; brother of Ribu (Ph. pl. 9b).
PEMBU, 29, lama. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29), father of Dugoo.
Mrs. Pembu, 23. (Ph. pl. 29).
Pichi, 23. Son of Datoop, brother of Pembu, carpenter (Ph. pl. 28a).
Pongring, 83, lama. Monastery custodian. d.r. Jiroong (Ph. pl. 9b).
PRUMTU, 15. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi, lives with half-brothers Tafoor and Chudo.
PUMRI, 74, *Mun*. Mother of Mrs. Lumba I, Mrs. Tempa. Recently married second Dorjé Lapoon, being widow of his "uncle" (Ph. pl. 15b).
Pursang, 11. 'Son' of Chano, brother of Mikmar.

Ribu, 12. Brother of Patek, q.v.
RIGYA, 23. 'Brother' of Nariya, whose parents adopted him. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung, Gyatso (Ph. pl. 26a).
Mrs. Rigya, 26.

Samblyou, 60. Sister of Mrs. Takal and Mrs. Gongyop, a promiscuous woman at present living with Zumba.
SANGKYAR, 36, a cretinous defective. Brother of Satéo, nephew of Gongyop and Thyak Thimbu, with latter of whom he lives.
Satéo, 27, a cripple. Brother of Sangkyar, q.v. lives with Chala Mandal (Ph. pl. 17b).

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Seryop Katoo, 17. Bastard son of Itup, q.v., born when his father was only 13.

SERVING, 90. Oldest man of Lingthem, descendant of former village heads. Adopted Agyung, grandson of elder brother (Ph. pl. 8a).

Songpo *youmi*, 67. d.r. Také, Kanden, Dadool.

Mrs. Songpo, 66, nun.

TAFOOR, 35, lama. Father of Chimpet and three daughters, brother of Chudo, 'son' of second Dorjé Lapoon, 'nephew' of Dunbi, 'brother' of Datoop (Ph. pl. 23).

MRS. TAFOOR, 31, nun. Daughter of Lharibu Chujen (Ph.pl. 22b).

Takal. 57, lama.

Mrs. Takal, 58, nun. Sister of Samblyou and Mrs. Gongyop, promiscuous.

Takneum *youmi*, 60. Adopted as a boy by his father's sister, father of Itup. Mother living, 84, nun (Ph. pl. 8b).

Takshyom, 19. Nephew of Kurma.

Tangvoong, 12. Daughter of Pargeut, sister of Kondé.

TEMPA, 44. Stranger to Zongu, married Pumri's daughter (Ph. pl. 7b).

Mrs. Tempa, 44. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Lumba I. Three daughters surviving.

Thyak-Thimbu, 49, *Mun*. Brother of Gongyop, uncle of Satéo and Sangkyar. Has two wives.

Tingkep *gyapōn*, 35. Brother of Ongden, q.v. Adopted Ongden's son, Atyook. His wife bore a child 1934.

TOBGÉ, 22. Son of elder brother of Jiroong with whom he lives (Ph. pl. 6a).

Mrs. Tobgé, 25. d.r. Mrs. Jiroong and Tempa.

Zumba, 48. Living with Samblyou. d.r. Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu.

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Introduction

By J. H. Hutton

(*William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge*)

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Early writers on India tell us of a strange people living about the sources of the Ganges, mild and gentle in manners and of blameless life. Some of their other strange attributes are scarcely human, but it is perhaps permissible to recognise in this account of a gentle race living in a remote valley of the Himalayas an echo of some contact with the Lepchas, who differ very remarkably in this quality of mildness from at any rate their more immediate neighbours. No one who has had to deal administratively with the Nepali gra[illegible] for instance, would impute to him an immoderate regard for the property or the predilections of his neighbours, nor is it at all a quality of the Gurkha in general; eastwards, on the other hand, the Bhutanese are not particularly noted for benignity and still less the Daflas and Akas beyond them. To find a cis-Himalayan society in any way comparable to that of the Lepchas in its successful elimination of aggressiveness from its members and the reduction of jealousy to a minimum it would be necessary to go west of Nepal to the districts of Lahaul and Spiti. How far it would be possible to find it there it is not easy to say, for our recorded knowledge of the social and domestic life of the peoples of the Himalayas is scanty. Even the officers of the Assam Government have not yet produced any monograph on any of the tribes on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. Now, however, we are well informed at any rate about the Lepchas, for Mr. Gorer's *Himalayan Village* follows only by two or three months Major C. J. Morris' *Living with Lepchas*, dealing with just the same area and the same individuals as are treated of in this volume.

Mr. Gorer has been at some pains to examine the source of the absence of aggressiveness among Lepchas. He came to the con-

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clusion that 'the [illegible]s' failure to develop any pattern of external aggression' is to be put down to 'their isolation, their low material development and the difficulty of wresting a livelihood from their environment'. He considers that although these reasons may be adequate for 'the lack of destructive aggression outside their group, the lack inside it cannot be explained in such general terms'. It is permissible perhaps to doubt whether any distinction can be drawn between the causes of a lack of the aggressive disposition outside and inside the group, but the author makes the interesting and attractive suggestion that an important factor in the latter aspect is the immediate and willing satisfaction of all an infant's expressed physical desires accompanied by a considerable degree of physical restraint, as infants spend most of their time 'firmly tied to the back of their guardian', and a refusal to encourage, but rather the contrary, any efforts of the child to acquire bodily technique, speech and physical independence. 'Young babies get no social approval from their attempts to crawl and walk; on the contrary a mobile baby is more likely to be picked up and replaced on its guardian's back, since there it is easier to control.' When, however, Mr. Gorer goes on to trace a connection between the 'partial extinction of self-assertion in early childhood' and the tendency which he points out in Lepchas to judge their fellows in their rôle of members of the society and not as personalities, and to emphasise this impersonal attitude as 'the chief operative factor for the suppression of competition and aggression in adult life' I must confess to scepticism. Instances of this 'impersonal' attitude, e.g. in the case of Katel, will be found on page 271 of Chapter Ten, and I have several times had just the same experience among Nagas and Kukis, where self-assertion and aggression are a *sine qua non*. It seems to me likely that this impersonal attitude, in which men are regarded as members of a society rather than individuals, is a necessary condition of the very corporate society in which such tribesmen live. Such a society, straitly limited in number and rigidly restricted in area, is in many respects, particularly in such activities as cultivating or house-building, and in Naga or Kuki communities of course warfare, dependent for its immediate existence on the spontaneous mutual co-operation of its members. If this is so, it seems unnecessary to hold that this impersonal attitude has any particular connection either with the attitude to children described, or with the absence of aggression among adults. Probably the same impersonal attitude is traceable

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in our own society among members of a team, for instance, where the suppression of personal preferences or dislikes is required in the interests of successful combination.

Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had over-emphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal however of Major Morris' book (and Major Morris is well acquainted with India, so that I can in some measure judge by his standards) shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas themselves are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all, it is by now a vicious circle, but either alternative seems possible. Perhaps the whole complex of want of aggression, sex-obsession and sterility arises from the effects of a long period of undisturbed isolation in an uncoveted terrain where no necessity for self-defence against external enemies was experienced. If this be so it should be possible to find parallels for Lepcha psychology in some island communities in Oceania. In spite of what the author describes as their 'fundamentally optimistic character' a certain lack of belief in their own efforts and future seems indicated among the Lepchas by their cynical attitude to their own beliefs; the way in which a rite should be performed, the occasions on which it is required, the correct precaution to be taken in many events are all known, but if they are not followed with any particularity (and commonly, it seems, they are not) well, *Ket ma-nin*—'It does not really matter.'

A similar attitude is suggested by their apparent proneness to suicide and there is ample evidence that the Lepcha is very conscious of his inferiority to the encroaching Nepali in the struggle for survival and of his dependence not on himself but on state protection for his continued existence as a tribe.

It is not then surprising that the Lepchas are a dwindling race, and it is fortunate that someone has been found to study their

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society before change and decay have gone further than they have already gone. Mr. Gorer is a new recruit to anthropology. He has indeed published books before this, and an anthropological bias was clearly to be observed in his *Bali and Angkor* and still more perhaps in *Africa Dances*, but *Himalayan Village* is a new departure and a serious and important contribution to anthropological literature. Nor is it so merely in the form of an addition to ethnological material resulting from observation and record in the field, for Mr. Gorer has a definite contribution to offer to anthropological thought in general. This will be apparent to readers of his seventeenth chapter—I have already quoted from it freely above—which would have been hardly less suitable as a prelude than as a conclusion to his volume. It contains both definitions and syllogisms which I do not myself accept, but even such ethnologists as may disagree with his conclusions and find his standpoint distasteful can feel nothing but gratitude for the feast of information which follows and for which it has here been my privilege to say grace.

J. H. HUTTON.

July 12th, 1938.

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

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This study of a primitive tribe suffers from two disadvantages, one inherent in the material, and one personal. The Lepchas are one of a number of mongoloid tribes inhabiting the southern slopes of the Himalayas; since most of the countries in which these tribes live are partially or completely closed to Europeans, there is very little precise information available about this culture area, and consequently many questions of culture contact, which will be inevitably raised in the following account, are at present unanswerable. I myself am not a professional anthropologist, in so far as I have never followed as a student any academic course in anthropology.

As an undergraduate at Cambridge I was much impressed by the work and legend of W. D. H. Rivers, who had died shortly before I became a student, and I followed with very great interest the lectures of Professor Sir William Ridgeway, who died at the end of my second year. But although I found the subject of anthropology an enthralling one, and read all the books I could on the subject, I never at that period of my life considered it feasible that I should myself become an anthropologist. I was at that time more interested in creative writing.

In 1934 I made, almost by chance, a three months' journey in West Africa, a journey undertaken under very favourable conditions; on my return I wrote a book about this journey; and though from the point of view of anthropology it was inevitably so superficial as to be almost worthless, it was indirectly through this book that the present study was made. It was through my book that I made the acquaintance of Major C. J. Morris, late 2nd Bn. 3rd Q.A.O. Gurkha Rifles, and he proposed to me that I should accompany him to India in 1936, after his return from the third Everest expedition; he hoped to make a study of the Gurkhas in their unexplored home in Nepal, but the hoped-for permission to enter

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114 that closed land was not forthcoming; so, as an alternative, he got the permission of the Maharajah of Sikkim to study the Lepchas in his country. During the whole of the visit Mr. Morris was my companion, and it was thanks to him that I was able to ignore both the practical and administrative difficulties in a strange land and under strange conditions which would most probably have proved insuperable to me unaided. Through his long-standing friendship with the Maharajah we not only obtained the permission to live indefinitely in Sikkim—a permission not easily obtained—but also his active collaboration in the choice of a site to work in and the co-operation of all the people, official and unofficial, directly or indirectly involved. I find it difficult to express adequately my sense of great indebtedness to Mr. Morris; his knowledge of local customs, both Native and European, were of inestimable help.

000 It was also through my book *Africa Dances* that I met Dr. Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Ruth Benedict of Columbia University, and Dr. John Dollard, of the Institute of Human Relations, Yale University, New Haven. Under the guidance of Drs. Mead and Benedict I spent the winter of 1935–36 studying the methodology and theoretical background of anthropology, and from Dr. John Dollard I learned to see in focus the interrelated problems of the individual in society. It is quite impossible for me to estimate my intellectual debt to these three inspiring teachers, and I have also to thank them for a very great service; for they undertook the great burden of reading the first draft of this book, commenting on it and advising me on a number of points. The sacrifice of their time by these hard-working people is a gift of inestimable value; my only hope is that this book is, to some slight extent, not altogether unworthy of their pains. If this should happily be so, it is almost entirely owing to their instruction and advice. I must also thank very sincerely Mrs. F. Norman, of the Department of Psychological Medicine, of Guy's Hospital, London, for having read the first draft of this book, advised me upon it, and discussed it with me; her help, particularly in Book Two, has been very great.

124 I arrived in India at the very end of 1936. Before going into Sikkim I spent two months in Kalimpong studying the Lepcha language with the help of missionised Lepchas. At the end of that period I had an adequate comprehension of the language, but, though I could understand everything that was said with, I think,

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most of the over-tones, I never spoke it more than very haltingly. Lepcha is a simple language structurally, but the labour of learning by heart several thousand vocables which it was impossible to connect with any language system I knew was a hard one. Fearing my working knowledge of the language might be inadequate I therefore took with me into Sikkim as an interpreter a young Lepcha named Sukra Singh who was being trained as a dispenser. His knowledge of English, though not profound, was adequate, and I was always able to check up on his not infrequent mistranslations. In the event, the presence of this interpreter proved very useful. The Lepchas have a tendency to monologue, for one person to speak continuously while the rest listen. If I can so express it, the Lepchas talk in paragraphs, and not in single sentences; they fall naturally into a long swinging rhythm, and much dislike being interrupted or held up in the middle of a narrative or anecdote. I found I could not possibly keep up my notes and a conversation at the same time; but the Lepchas found it an easy matter to make a long statement and then pause while the statement was repeated. Since none of the Lepchas of Lingthem had had any but the most casual contact with Europeans—indeed most of the men and all the women had never seen one before—they had no set ideas of the way Europeans behave. They have however in their mythology and stories the tradition of nobles (into which group we naturally fell as being under the protection and recommendation of the Maharajah) being accompanied by servants, and doing all business through their intermediary. Without the use of an interpreter who, with his repetitions which I hardly listened to, would slow down the pace of a conversation sufficiently for me to take full notes, I could never have taken down the life-histories and elaborate ritual in anything like such full detail. When he was not present I had to ask people to wait, or to repeat themselves; the Lepchas disliked this, just as much as they disliked questions demanding a direct answer; they were quickly disconcerted and lost the thread of their narrative. Until I knew people well I asked as few questions as possible; as far as possible I checked and counter-checked every statement, but this was mostly done spontaneously by different Lepchas discussing identical subjects, or by their arguing among themselves. The most I would do with strangers was to suggest a subject for discussion; I only cross-examined those people with whom I had already a confidential relationship.

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124 I am aware that the use of interpreters is held to invalidate a great deal of anthropological work; but the Lepchas got used to Sukra Singh—a person of endless patience and constant good temper—as soon or sooner than they did to us, and I question whether his absence would have made for any greater intimacy. I was never really dependent on him, and, without his slowing up the pace of conversation, I could never have got the almost word for word texts that I obtained. When he was not with me I found myself quite incapable of taking sufficiently full notes; and those I made from memory subsequently inevitably lacked the clearness and precision of those I took more normally. Unless I had invented some form of Lepcha shorthand or employed a dictaphone my work among the Lepchas would have been far less detailed; only when talking to children or to big groups was the presence of my interpreter useless or a hindrance.

000 I have put a few notes on the Lepcha language into an appendix[1] for the benefit of those who are interested in such matters and also a vocabulary of those Lepcha words which I have been forced to employ in the text. I have avoided using Lepcha words as far as possible, and have given no Lepcha texts; I am unable to understand the reasoning of those anthropologists who consider that the inclusion in an English book of sentences in a language which not one reader can understand gives the study greater scientific or objective value. My own feeling is that the value of texts is almost entirely linguistic; and so for the use of philologists I propose to deposit a few selected texts (stories and prayers) with my Lepcha vocabulary with the School of Oriental Languages, London.

114 I lived in Zongu among the Lepchas during March, April and May 1937. Frequently in this book, in order to avoid clumsiness, 128 I have used the present tense and referred to different periods as 'now', 'three months ago', 'ten years ago.' In all cases the point of reference from which time is measured is the spring of 1937.

000 In India and Sikkim I received kindness and help from so many people that it is difficult even to enumerate them all. The many people who have experienced the great and unfailing kindness and hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Odling of Kalimpong will understand that I can find no words to express my gratitude to them; you cannot thank people who have given you a home. I should also like to thank very sincerely His Highness Sir Tashi Namgyal, K.C.I.E., Maharajah of Sikkim, for his kindness and

[1] See Appendix VI.

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co-operation; and also Rai Sahib, Tashi Dadul, the Private Secretary to His Highness, Rai Sahib, Sonam Dadul, Rhennock Kazi and official Steward in charge of Palace affairs; the Honourable Mary Scott, D.D., of Gangtok, and the Very Reverend Dr. J. A. Graham, C.I.E., D.D., of Kalimpong, all of whom gave me much help and advice. My thanks are also due to Sukra Singh for his unfailing patience and good temper in situations which would have disconcerted many more sophisticated people.

I have attempted within a single volume to give an adequate description of Lepcha society and in particular of the village of Lingthem; to avoid undue length I have had to suppress a considerable amount of minor detail, but I hope that I have done this without obscuring or falsifying any facts. The religions I have in particular dealt with very summarily, for a full treatment would require a second volume comparable in size to this one, and would heavily overweight the picture I am trying to present. The volume is divided into three books, each of which represents to some extent a different method of description; in Book One I have presented the material and formalised aspects of Lepcha society, in Book Two the mainly unformalised aspects of Lepcha life, and in Book Three the history of certain individuals. I have tried to make a total picture by presenting three view-points: the frame-work of the society, the impact of the culture on the people, and the individuals who are the product of that culture and society. I have employed, to the best of my ability, the various disciplines, anthropological and psychological, functional and Freudian, which seemed apposite to the aim I had in mind; I have used them eclectically, for most of the disciplines seem to me useful and none of them completely adequate alone. My methods of working and my attitude to various aspects of anthropology are described in appropriate places in the text, particularly in Chapters Ten and Seventeen. In Chapter Seventeen I have attempted to answer some of the problems raised by my study of the Lepchas.

It has seemed to me that many sociological works appear to neglect the individuals who compose the societies they are describing; in so far as I claim any novelty in the treatment of the subject-matter of this book, it is in the fact that I have let the Lepchas speak for themselves, that I have tried not to forget that the village of Lingthem is inhabited by one hundred and seventy-six persons, and the reserve of Zongu by about two thousand. I have tried to illustrate every statement from the lives of the people of

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Lingthem and this has inevitably forced me to employ personal names a great deal. To make reference easier I am giving a list of the people mentioned in the text, with their ages and chief relationships; this is not quite a complete list of the inhabitants; full lists will be found in Appendix I. Before and after all my thanks are due to those Lepchas of Lingthem who accepted and were kind to an inquisitive and ignorant stranger.

GEOFFREY GORER.

July 1937–*May* 1938.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered Lepchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in Sikkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were employed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropologists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere else as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has apparently been found between the Lepcha language and some dialect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the people of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of their own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans at some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. 'Lepcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-cho*—meaning, though the philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the Russian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since all books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, it would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word would appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present Darjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before the beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

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175 but it would seem as though this original colonisation was little more than a feudal overlordship imposed by a small minority on the Lepcha population. After the internal revolution and Chinese wars in Tibet in the early seventeenth century three 'Red Hat' lamas fled to Sikkim, speedily converted the Lepchas and what other inhabitants there were, and created a Sikkimese Tibetan king; from this king the present Maharajah of Sikkim is indirectly descended. A subsequent legend puts back the conversion of Sikkim to lamaism some centuries earlier; it is said that one of the lamaist saints lived in the country and deposited sacred writings in various caves, where they were subsequently discovered.

From the time of the establishment of a Sikkimese kingdom the Lepchas became an 'inferior' subject race, under the domination of the Sikkimese Tibetans or Bhotias, to which race the Maharajah and the big landowners belonged. For a considerable period the Lepchas were debarred on account of their race from entering the lamaist monasteries, and, though this rule is now relaxed, it is questionable whether a Lepcha could today obtain an important position in the big monasteries outside the Lepcha reserve. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Lepchas fought with the Sikkimese against the continued invasions of the Nepali and Bhutanese; the country was then in a very uncertain state, and there was continuous slave-raiding; the memory of this is still kept lively by the threat which older people will make to a crying child that 'If you don't keep quiet a Tibetan (or Bhutanese) will come along with a big bag and take you away.' During the early nineteenth century a number of treaties were made between Sikkim and British India, broken, and re-made; finally in 1835 the Darjeeling district, naturally together with its inhabitants, was ceded by the Maharajah to the British in exchange for an annuity.

648 It can be seen that the Lepchas have been for a considerable period a subject race, under the domination of the Bhotias and English. They are agriculturists and hunters, but in Sikkim the best land has been taken by the Bhotias, and later by the Nepali who have immigrated into the country in great numbers; in Darjeeling much of the jungle and agricultural land has been turned into tea-estates, and the Lepchas have become workers on the

Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (edited by Filippo de Filippi. London. George Routledge. 1932). Writing in the early eighteenth century Desideri speaks of Sikkim (p. 118 and *passim*) as a province of Tibet, which had to pay tribute to Lhassa, and he makes no mention of its relatively recent conquest. He calls the province Brêe-mê-jong, which means, 'the nice country.'

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tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not made the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepchâ. All

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184 the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a 177 community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful [657] agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

794 In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite 797 the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

797 In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script 212 three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

212 The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

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of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until 212
the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu 191
literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures
and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can 212
read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks [213]
in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later 114
General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[4] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[4] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Coll. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.

Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 them to rank high among civilised nations, could be engendered amidst the wilds and fastnesses of the Himalayas. They retain, in so marked a degree, all the simple ways of the patriarchs of old, as to lead to the conclusion that they must have remained isolated ever since such customs were in vogue. The type of features indicates that before settling in the Himalayas, they had probably resided in Mongolia and Manchuria and in, or near one of these countries, the body of the people might still be found. The language is a monosyllabic one (though not altogether an isolating one, as it possesses in a degree—as all languages however primitive do—an agglutinative structure) and is unquestionably far anterior to the Hebrew or Sanskrit. It is pre-eminently an *Ursprache*, being probably, and I think, I may without fear of misrepresentations, state it to be, the oldest language extent. It is a most comprehensive and beautiful one; and regarded alone, as a prolific source of the derivations and etyma of words, it is invaluable to the philological world. It however recommends itself to us on higher grounds; it possesses and plainly evinces the principle and motive on which all language is constructed.[5] But like everything really good in this world it has been despised and rejected. To allow the Lepcha race, and the language itself to die out would indeed be most barbarous, and inexpressibly sad.'

Although, or perhaps because, the good General was so conscious of the invaluable qualities of the Lepcha language, he was inclined to be severe with the Lepchas who spoke, to his mind, incorrectly. He constructed a huge grammar on Indo-Germanic principles (Lepcha is an uninflected language with no grammar at all) in which he administers severe reproofs to casual speakers; thus

'The Lepchas are apt to pronounce o as u, and hence when writing to confound it with u; this error should be avoided and corrected in the Lepchas.'

'Different local pronunciations, however, and often ignorance, etc., render the change, in the first syllable of dissyllabic words, very common, and sometimes, very irregular; this disorganising tendency should be, altogether, discouraged; and the proper

[5] *Note by Gen. Mainwaring*: In the structure of the Lepcha language I have discovered the system on which, I consider, all language is based. By an exegesis which I have, in part, prepared (combined with a diagram showing the rudimental power of letters), the root and true signification of all words in all languages, are, at once, apparent.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

prefixed syllable, when decided upon, should be adhered to. The principle should be laid down as a canon, and systematically impressed on the Lepchas.' 114

The General was so occupied with his teaching—he founded a sort of college for Lepchas near Darjeeling—that he died before he had time to publish The Power of Letters, and the Lepcha dictionary which was to illustrate his points. After his death his manuscript was edited and published by a German Tibetan scholar who knew no Lepcha and not too much English; all the General's fantastic etymological derivations were cut out and the Lepcha script abandoned in favour of an almost incomprehensible system of phonetic transliteration. The government official in charge wrote to Herr Grünwedel 'The so-called Lepcha alphabet used by General Mainwaring is a pure fiction. The language has properly speaking no written character, though it is possible that on a few occasions a debased variety of the Tibetan character may have been resorted to. There is however no necessity whatever and no real justification for incurring the expense of starting Lepcha type, nor as a matter of fact can a complete fount of such type be constructed.' Considering that there were then numerous Lepcha books in manuscript in existence, and that the Baptists had already founded a complete Lepcha type, the instructions are, in a small way, a fine example of Imperial diplomacy. The dictionary is almost entirely Lepcha-English, and is chiefly useful for its indication of Tibetan loan-words; the identifications of plants and animals are in many cases questionable.

As far as I know the only other person who has paid more than passing attention to the Lepchas is Miss C. de Beauvoir Stocks, who made two tours in Sikkim in 1925 to collect folktales; she spent three days in Lingthem. I came across a number of the stories Miss Stocks had printed[6] and though many of them had been bowdlerised almost out of recognition (probably through the prudery of her interpreter) the almost word-for-word similarity of passages of no particular dramatic interest was striking. Miss Stocks also added some notes on Lepcha customs which correspond in practically no particular with my observations; many are the same as those made about the Sikkimese in the *Gazeteer of Sikkim.*

[6] 'Folklore and Customs of the Lap-chas of Sikkim.' By C. de Beauvoir Stocks. From the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New Series), Vol. XXI, 1925, No. 4.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha
Sikkim AK3

iii

643 Sikkim is today an independent Native State ruled by an hereditary Maharajah; in his work he is assisted by a number of large land-owners and hereditary ministers called *Kazi*, and also by the advice of a resident British Political Officer. The state, which is 131 less than the size of Wales, lies between 27 and 28 degrees north and 88 and 89 degrees east; its population at the last census was 161 109,808 persons. It has no railways and no organised transport, 487 but a motor road leads from the capital Gangtok into British India [436] and there is a regular postal service. British India coinage is used.[7]

It is unnecessary for me to discuss in any detail the major policies 648 of the State of Sikkim. The Maharajah is a fervent Buddhist and gives active encouragement to the lamas; and with a couple of exceptions[8] there are no Christian missionaries in the state. There are only half-a-dozen resident Europeans in Sikkim; and for Europeans to enter the state it is necessary to get permission from the political authorities of Gangtok or Darjeeling. Permission for a short visit of a fortnight or so is usually easily given, and Sikkim is a favourite spot for camping holidays among the inhabitants of the plains of India. There are a number of well-appointed [484] *dak*-bungalows along the main routes and it is very seldom that travellers leave these routes. The chief reason for the partial closing of the State is that Sikkim acts as an, as it were, buffer state to Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. The frontiers to these completely closed States are relatively unguarded and much embarrassment and annoyance has been caused by adventurers or notoriety seekers entering those countries without permission. Consequently nowadays all applicants for passes to Sikkim have to make a written

[7] The basis of British India coinage is the rupee, a large silver coin worth a little over 1/4, or about 32 American cents. The rupee is divided into sixteen annas, worth about a penny or two cents each; there are coins of one, two, four and eight annas, of nickel. The anna is again subdivided into pice and pies, represented by small copper coins. Sums larger than one rupee are paper banknotes, worth Rs. 5, 10, 50, 100, etc. The silver content of the rupee is said to equal its purchasing power. The usual method of denoting sums in rupees is to place first the sign Rs. then the number of rupees, and a bar with on the right side the annas. Thus two rupees, eight annas is printed *Rs.* 2/8. As this method is already customary in works dealing with India, I am employing it in this book.

[8] For a great number of years the Hon. Mary Scott, D.D., has represented the Church of Scotland in Gangtok; and I am told that there are a couple of women missionaries of the Finnish Churches in Lachung.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
SIKKIM AK3

declaration that they will not pass the frontiers of Tibet, Bhutan or Nepal; those who break this obligation are liable to imprisonment and punishment if caught.

As far as I can see the State of Sikkim is well and paternally administered; the extremely precipitous nature of the whole country has rendered road-building extremely difficult; but the main mule roads into Tibet are kept up in a good state, and solid bridges have been built on these roads. Sikkim has few natural resources except for some small copper mines in the south and (as far as I could tell, undeveloped) large quantities of mica-bearing stone in the north. Sikkim is strategically important as being on the main road between Tibet and India, and nearly all the trade between the two countries passes through it. The Political Officer, assisted by trade agents inside the Tibetan frontier, overlooks this traffic; he also advises the Maharajah on questions of policy.

Since the middle of the last century Sikkim has been free from war and the fear of war, and its history has been as uneventful and as happy as the poorness of the country allows. The only diversion of a military nature in which Sikkim has been involved was the Younghusband expedition to Lhassa in 1905–06 in which several Sikkimese and Lepchas took part. In recent years there has been so great an immigration of Nepalis into Sikkim that it is probable that in the southern part of the country these invaders outnumber the original inhabitants; laws have been passed prohibiting their settling to the north of certain fixed points, but it is not certain to what extent these laws are enforced.

The pacification of the whole country through the British protectorate has given the Lepchas general security; besides abolishing slave-raiding it has also put an end to the mild peonage which formerly existed among the Lepchas themselves. One day in Lingthem the lama Jiroong, when he was rather drunk, embarked on a widely applauded panegyric of the beneficial influence of the British, and of their confirmation in power of the Maharajah. Before the English came, he said, we Lepchas were harried by Tibetans and Nepali and could not settle anywhere for fear we should be sold as slaves; now we have our homes and can cultivate our crops.

Jiroong himself is the descendant of former slaves. Some generations ago his ancestor, then a small boy, was kidnapped by Bhutanese; but the boy was rescued by the then head of the village

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

567 —Serving's father—and brought up as his peon. Such Lepcha slaves were either the children of slaves, orphans, or the children of very poor parents. A man would bring up such children and they in turn had to serve him all their lives. If the owner got a child on a female slave the child would be treated as his own, and, if a boy, would inherit, though a smaller portion than the legitimate sons. Slaves could only marry slaves, but otherwise were not distinguished by any special treatment; they received religious attention like ordinary people, and could not be sold or transferred. As in all other cases of emotional relationship among the Lepchas, there was no fixed or expected attitude between masters and slaves; if the master was kind, he was loved like a father. There was a fixed limit to the number of slaves one person could own.

A modification of this situation continues today. If there are children with nobody to look after them, as occasionally occurs, the head of the village, the Mandal, will take them into his household. When they are young they work for the Mandal like a servant, but when they grow up the Mandal arranges a marriage for them and they are then independent; there is at no time any coercion.

iv

177 In some respects the Lepchas are in a different state to most groups hitherto described by anthropologists. A few studies have been made of tribes who have only had contact with other tribes in a similar state of development, but far and away the greater number had already been more or less seriously influenced by Occidental culture, either through colonisation, missionaries, or traders. Sometimes this external modification is taken into account, sometimes practically ignored; in either case the extent and direction of European influence is easily calculable and understandable. The Lepchas on the other hand have not been in any way directly exposed to European colonisation or missionary influence. Except for an occasional tourist to Talung monastery, and the passage of a couple of mountaineering expeditions attempting to climb Kinchenjunga, Europeans have not entered Zongu. A few of the men had seen Europeans prior to our arrival through trading expeditions to Gangtok and Darjeeling, but practically none of the women; they considered us 'amazing,' particularly on account of the colour of our skins and the shape of our noses.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1
Sikkim AK3

L 177

Although they have not been influenced by Europeans the Lepchas have been very greatly influenced and their ways of life much modified by the contact and pressure of their more highly developed neighbours, the Sikkimese, the Nepali, and above all the Tibetans. The extent of this modification is almost incalculable, owing to the fact that there is no precise information available about these neighbouring societies. Tibet is, I suppose, the most written-about country in the world, but none of the literature that I know of is sufficiently detailed to allow comparisons between the Lepchas and any equivalent Tibetan group. Although there are many books on lamaism I have found none which describes the Lhatsun-pa subsect of the Nyingma-pa sect—the variation followed in Lingthem monastery—so that it is impossible to state definitely whether the Lepchas have ignored or considerably modified any aspect or aspects of the religion to which they have been converted. It is as though an investigator were trying to find out about Baptists and could only get information about Christianity in general, with some of the more obvious distinctions between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism noted.

N S [113 114]

With regard to the Sikkimese and non-Gurkha Nepali the situation is in some respects simpler; there is practically no information of any sort available about them. The *Gazeteer of Sikkim* published over forty years ago, contains some generalised statements about the habits of the Sikkimese; and the writings* and conversation of Major C. J. Morris who had studied the Gurkha soldiers under his command have given me information on certain points. Despite this slight help it is impossible in nearly every instance to state with any sort of certainty whether a given custom, belief or story is confined to the Lepchas, is shared by them with some other tribe, or has been relatively recently introduced from without. On the whole the only available source of information has been Lepcha tradition. Until other tribes in the same area have been studied (and the fact that Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet are practically closed to Europeans makes such studies in the near future problematical) precise questions of culture contact must remain unanswered.

L 171

L 142

The Lepchas are a mongoloid people, with, it would seem, slightly more pronounced Mongolian features, fairer complexions and greater stature than their present neighbours. Many of the children have carroty or auburn hair, but the hair of adults is always

* *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Gurkhas.* By Major C. J. Morris. Delhi 1937.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour
[141] would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and
302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also
291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men
142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *chogen*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu. 487

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation. 346 [784]

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment. [249]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

080

BOOK ONE

Lepcha Life

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a [136 137] decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-bu* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346

Above: LINGTHEM MONASTERY FROM BELOW
Below: LINGTHEM MONASTERY FROM ABOVE
Note the prayer flags.

[facing p. 52]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number
291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a
[177] feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the
biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only
worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the
richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama
—a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the
waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.
[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave
all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother
to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy
clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect,
to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs
of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial
trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very
few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—
it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some
sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not,
and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine
to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
[75] the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there.
Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their
clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting;
children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the
Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is con-
siderably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other
subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is
less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer
the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not
appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside
world has modified the character or habits of these people in any
way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people
of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through
the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively
rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to
cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settle-
ments are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

361 villages on the Zongu bank. Excluding the Talung monastery, which is a couple of days' journey from most of the villages, and
184 which, save for a guardian, is empty except during certain festivals, there are no lamaist monasteries and very few lamas on this bank.
[829] The inhabitants of this portion are considered by the people of Zongu to be uncivilised and rude, keeping much more to the habits of their forefathers. For a great deal of their food they rely on hunting and forest produce; their religion is still almost entirely that of the Mun, the lamaist propaganda having reached them very slightly. Owing to the excessively precipitous nature of the ground I never went over to this side of the river; on a few occasions however I saw some of the inhabitants.

361 There are in Zongu itself twenty-two settlements with distinctive names, and across the river eight more; some of these
621 named settlements only consist of two or three houses and they are administratively and emotionally divided into twelve districts. Although it is convenient to speak of villages these settlements have no sort of geographical unity; the houses are either isolated in the fields and forests, or gathered in small groups of three or four; I never saw more than four houses which were close neighbours. Except for the three villages—Lingthem, Gyatong and Tangvoong—which possess a monastery, there is no sort of focal centre to the village, and it would be possible for a casual traveller to pass through quite a large village without being aware of its existence. Lingthem, where I lived, consisted of 33 houses; it is the biggest village on the Talung side of Zongu, and the second biggest in the reserve; the biggest of all is Gyatong, which, with its neighbour Hi, contains 60 houses. From the spur of one hill in Lingthem it is possible to see eight houses at once; I should reckon that there were quite three miles and three thousand feet between the lowest house to the east and the highest house to the west in the village.

621 When three or four houses are grouped together they are usually given a distinctive name. This grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours; people living in adjoining houses may be closely related, or they may be complete strangers, and full brothers may live separated by the full distance of the village.[2] The metaphysical desiderata, described later in this chapter, for the choice of a house site and

[2] For the plan of the houses of Lingthem and their inhabitants, see Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hazards of inheritance account sufficiently for the meaningless grouping of neighbours. 621

The names of the villages on either side of the river Talung are accounted for by the following oft-repeated etymological myth: 621 773 539

'On any clear day there is visible from Lingthem a large gendarme of black rock rising from the mountain Siniolchi, or, as it is called in Lepcha, Sanyol-koong. On that gendarme there lived once upon a time a devil called Lassoo-fo *moong* (the Lassoo bird devil). This devil was a man-eater; he used to capture people all through the neighbourhood and take them away to Tibet where he would kill and eat them. Therefore the Gods Kansi *thing* (lord), Kom-yo *thing* and Saktsum *thing* consulted together as to how they could kill this demon. They tried to find a man who was capable, but they could not do so. They then went to the caterpillar *pi-sik-bu* who gnaws trees so that they become hollow and fall down, and they told him to go and cut down the tree in that place.[3] The caterpillar agreed and hollowed the tree so that it fell down, after which the demon had no place to live and went wandering about. Then the three gods sent for Rum-nam (a mythological hero) to kill the demon, and wherever the demon went Rum-nam followed.

'The demon went down the Talung valley and came to Sakyong (so called because Tag-kyong-ka was killed there), Pantoong, Thong-to, Lavén, Tangvoong, Lungdeum (where he killed children), A-dong, Ling-them (*tem-la tem-la taa*: he ate each in turn): the village opposite is called Liklyang, the place of crying, because people cried out from there.[4] Rum-nam chased him and eventually overtook him at Lasso-tsong-nyong, in the Teesta valley to the west, and there killed him and scattered his flesh over the land. From this scattered flesh arose leeches and mosquitoes, and the small predatory bird *kar-hu-fo*. His bones turned into stone, and at the place where he was slain there is a huge stone which can be seen to this day.'

Except for questions of the size of the population and the fertility of the land and some minor details of internal administration, 621

[3] There is a verbal confusion here between the various meanings of the word *koong*—(1) mountain peak, and (2) tree, worked wood, and finally house-pillar. There are obviously no trees on the gendarme which is well above the snow level. However I heard this story repeated several times in identical terms.

[4] All the other village names have etymological derivations from the same legend, but it seems unnecessary to give them all.

1: Gorer J#5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far 184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest 539 when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [787]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [386] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch 778 is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[188] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

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wall on their right side (as must be done for all lamaist holy 346
places or objects) turning the prayer wheels as they come up to 778
them.

The chief holy place is a large bare room, occupying almost the whole of the ground floor of the building. The interior of the room is empty except for four supporting pillars in the middle of the floor, and two slightly raised seats running in parallel lines from the altar to the door on which the lamas sit during ceremonies. In the centre of the back wall is the altar, inset in a carved wooden frame; on it are three large images, Sangyi Youbami in the centre, flanked by Gamyang Kanché Rimbuché and Chérézi; in front of these larger images are four smaller gods. On either side of [779] the altar are worked wooden pigeon-holes, in which are kept the hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyour, one of the two Tibetan scriptures. These volumes consist of loose leaves bound up in a cloth and fastened between two plain pieces of wood as bindings. Scattered about the room are the various musical instruments which [534] are not in use—drums, gongs and cymbals; the metal instruments similar to trumpets and clarionets, the conch shells and the flutes made out of a human femur are kept either on or before the altar. Every morning at dawn a *kané* (sacristan) places on the altar before the images seven bowls of water for the gods to drink and wash in; every evening at sunset these bowls are emptied and replaced by *chimi*—altar lights, consisting of a small metal container with a wick of bamboo or cloth, filled with melted butter or oil. There also stands on the altar a copper jug containing blessed water (*tyü*) and usually a pair of vases filled with flowers. There are also occasional offerings of cones of ground grain. During important festivals the front of the altar is completely hidden by elaborate constructions, chiefly made out of dough and butter which represent those gods who are being specially worshipped. Anybody approaching this or any other lamaist altar for the first time is meant to prostrate himself three times, standing with joined hands, falling to the knees and then touching the ground with the forehead. After these prostrations no special attention is paid to the altar, and it is quite permissible to turn one's back on it.

To the west of the main room, with a separate entrance also on the north wall, is the *lha-gong*. This is a high and narrow chamber almost entirely filled with four huge prayer wheels, reaching up to the ceiling; indeed the first and biggest of the wheels, which is called Betsa Guru, pierces the ceiling and its top, a cone

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of
778 the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused
[783 cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark
785] chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A
[778] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas [illegible]ingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber
289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

1: Górer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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346
24

Above: A LEPCHA HOUSE

Below: A *MOONG LI:* A HOUSE FOR THE 'HOUSE-GOBLIN' *THYAK-DUM*, SITUATED IN A CARDAMUM FIELD; BEHIND ANOTHER HOUSE

[facing p. 60]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised 351 level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) 794 which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery
794 precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were
[868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

iii

621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

itself is made of wood, plaster, bamboo and thatch. All buildings have their entrance to the east and face north; the north-south sides are the longest. The first portions of the building to be erected are the five upright supports, one in the centre and one at each corner; they consist of roughly shaped tree-trunks. For the erection of these supports and for the building of the stone wall an overseer is necessary; for the rest of the building no director is used. The floor is usually woven bamboo, but some of the richer people cover the bamboo with smoothed planks; the walls are always of bamboo covered with plaster, occasionally with wooden supports. Except in the Mandal's house, where there are a couple of window frames, the south and west walls are blind; the entrance, which is reached by a pair of notched logs or rough steps, is always on the east; and round the east and north side runs a balcony of plaited bamboo. The north wall is mostly open to the balcony but there are usually wooden shutters which can be closed when the nights are cold. The balcony is used a great deal; for gossiping in the daytime or during warm evenings, for a great variety of household tasks, since there is seldom much light inside the house, as a place where fowls can roost, and as a latrine for infants, invalids, the drunk or the lazy. The roof is made of reeds hung over bamboo and supported on a wooden frame; the north and south sides of the roof cover the whole space between the roof-tree and the top of the wall, but the east and west sides are somewhat inserted at a slightly lower angle, so that there is a triangle (either empty or filled with widely-woven bamboo) on the east and west sides under the roof-tree which is meant to provide ventilation and an escape for the smoke; the device is not very successful and often of an evening I was half-blinded by smoke so that I could not see across a room and the tears streamed down my face. The Lepchas are completely inured to this atmosphere and could not understand why I coughed and choked.

The great majority of Lepcha houses consist of two rooms and an attic; a few of the poorest have only one room, and a couple of the biggest houses have a third small store-room beyond the *dé-ong*. The first room on entering from the east is the *thop-song*, or, as I shall refer to it in future, the kitchen. Round the side are either slightly raised shelves or a bar set into the wooden floor, which marks the sleeping places of the members of the household. During the day the bedding and pillows are rolled up and put away in boxes and are only brought out just before retiring to sleep. Except

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[352] for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are 342 avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the [354] daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353 there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously 554] with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

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these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

532 detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

778 All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of
532 impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives
412 are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge
[439] and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

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286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty [556] of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household [592] do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 342 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought 592 up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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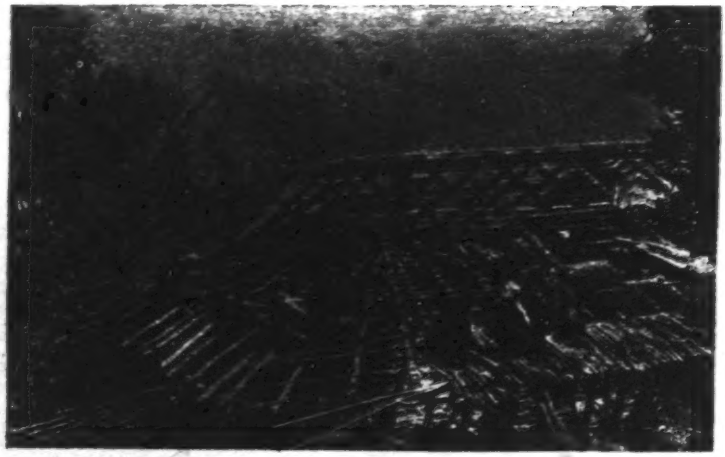

EVERYBODY HELPS WITH THE THATCHING OF PEMBU'S ROOF

[facing p. 68]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 592 Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants, the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable know-
[824] ledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[551] [7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Pamung-mu (woman from Pamung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X'; since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 century; about a generation later the Lepchas started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in land must have developed somewhat later; according to native tradition the land below the monastery—that is to say the more protected valley ground—has been divided into private property from time immemorial, but the higher ground was common property and was acquired and cleared as was wanted. At the time of Kahlyeu's father—that is to say about 1840—this ground too was divided up, and today all cultivatable ground is privately owned. Kahlyeu also said that until about 120 years ago only millet was cultivated, and not dry rice; but this seems to me improbable in view of the fact that the religious observances[8] are much more concerned with dry rice, than with millet or any other crop.

342 When new houses are made they are always built in the late autumn months, after the gathering of the harvest. This date is 777 dictated by two reasons; at no other period would people have sufficient leisure and other dates would be ill-omened. The intending builder gathers materials for some months beforehand. The site of a new house is decided by a number of metaphysical considerations.

[779] First of all there is a lamaist book called Sachet Zai Putta which contains general rules of a very minute nature, indicating what sites are lucky, and what unlucky. This book is said to have been composed by four Gods who gathered together at Gyakar (perhaps Benares) to compile rules so that people should know which sites are good and which bad, which fruitful and which barren, where children can be born, and where they cannot. The following is a small selection of these very detailed regulations:

'A good site is, if there is a mountain to the south and below a slope. It is good if there is a stream on either side of the slope and trees in front. It is good if there is an outcrop of rock to the east and a flat plain to the west and a water fall opposite. Roads from east and north are good, but those from south and west should be avoided as they are used by Deut *moong* (fever devil). If there is a tree to the north directly below the house it should never be cut down; if, however, there is one to the south directly above it, it should be cut, or, if it be too big to cut down, a knife or some other piece of iron should be stuck into it. If the earth on which the

[8] See Chapter Nine. It is probable that millet was historically the earlier crop: what I question is the date of the introduction of dry rice.

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house is built is soft the house-mother will die. It is bad if there is not a hill between the north and the east because you will get the wind. 342 777

'*Choten* and *Mani* ('Mani walls' and prayer flags) should never be placed to the east or the inhabitants of the house will die, they should be on the north and west. It is good if the hill behind be covered with trees. It is bad to have a red cliff behind to the south; people born in the year of the Horse or the year of the Snake will be particularly troubled. (This can be averted by elaborate ceremonies.)

'It is bad if there is standing water below the house which will reflect the light; if there is, gold, silver and copper should be put in the water. It is bad if water seeps through the ground below the house, above it does not matter. It is bad if there is a cave to the north or west; for that would be the home of Mamoo *moong* (a malevolent female devil). It is bad to be below a pass between two hills, with a land slip below you, this is a devil's road. It is bad if there is a juniper tree (*sanden koong*) to the west, . . . etc.'

When an intending builder has chosen a site which fulfils these general desiderata, he has still to find out whether that site will be propitious for him personally. To do this he digs up a small piece of earth from the intended site, concentrating fixedly all the time on the question of whether the ground is good-omened or not, [787] and takes it to a competent lama[9] who will then consult the book *Tong-yoop* and cast a horoscope to see if the site is suitable in relation to the intending builder's horoscope, reckoned by the various year-cycles.[10] If the first site chosen is not propitious others must be looked for until a suitable one is found. It consequently follows that all other considerations are secondary; it is better to be near a stream (for water for domestic use and also in case of fire) and to have suitable ground near for a field-garden, and, if possible, to be near friends and relations; but the verdict of the lamas comes first.

When the site is finally determined upon the lama carefully 342 replaces the sample of earth, and then offers *cherkem*—that is mixed grains floating in strained *chi*—which is thrown on to the ground

[9] In Lingthem only Tafoor and the two Dorjé Lapoon knew how to cast this horoscope; the Lharibu Chujen of Panung was the only lama in the neighbourhood to possess or be able to read Sachet Zai Putta. [787]

[10] See Chapter Seven, pp. 209–212) and Appendix III.

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342 so as to gratify the devils which have taken up their abode in the neighbourhood so that they shall not trouble the work in progress. Then the four corner-posts and the centre post are set up, and the low stone walls, on which the house will rest, are built. The building should always start from the east. After the pillars and stone walls have been set up straight by an overseer the building proceeds without direction, the walls, flooring, ceiling, rafters and finally the thatch being built. When people know that [476] a house is being built or repaired they come to help spontaneously; they are given no pay or wages of any sort except a meal at the end of the day; but they know that they in their turn will receive help when they need it. Men, women and children all lend a hand at the various tasks; but women are considered incapable of handling the biggest pieces of timber.

Some time after its completion the house must be consecrated by lamas and Mun with the ceremony of *Tashi chéné*; ideally this should be performed as soon as the house is completed and repeated twice in subsequent years; but it is often not done immediately for the owner may not possess the ox and other necessary materials. When the first meal is eaten in the completed house some old and experienced man (not the house-owner himself, but it does not matter who else) must make a small hole in the roof immediately above the fireplace and throw out a live ember and some water; this is done so that the smoke may go out properly and not fill the house.

The ceremony of *Tashi chéné* is as follows. First of all incense leaves are burned to pacify the demons who live in the earth below the house and who may have inhabited the trees of which the house is [782] built. Then a live ox is dedicated by a Mun to all the gods, slaughtered and cut up; the head, right foreleg and left hind-leg [465] (these portions are called *ga-zook*) are given to the carpenters who have worked on the house as their fee. After this a lamaist ceremony, with music and readings from the appropriate books, is performed, at the end of which the chief lama present (if possible one of the Dorjé Lapoon)[11] will anoint the house-pillars with blood, *chi*, liquor and butter, starting with the western pillar and proceeding to

[11] Dorjé Lapoon is the title given to the oldest, wisest, and most revered lamas; it is not strictly translatable: dorjé is the sacred 'thunderbolt' which is part of the lama's sacred paraphernalia; lapoon means teacher. In works dealing with Tibet the title is usually translated as 'abbot', but this term seems to me inappropriate for non-resident dignitaries.

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the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu.* Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu.* This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house. 342 [751]

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs. 356

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours. 356 673

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses. 356

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

356 much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

776 Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* [787] lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go [782] away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

346 In some houses however it is divined that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and 346 is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's 782 house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with rice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *chi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to the inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new house would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if the old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* would accompany them, spending most of his time with them, but occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last point is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens that Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently unlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and if it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, the survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem had had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabitants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were actually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors preferred to live with relations rather than cope with the work alone.

V

In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; it is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables and roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are only grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of the field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring wheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This garden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal manure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals shelter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. At the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, cultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable material. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit trees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and occasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their flowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the surrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land near their house. All possess some strips of land—often more than a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes of the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of wet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

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241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

vi

776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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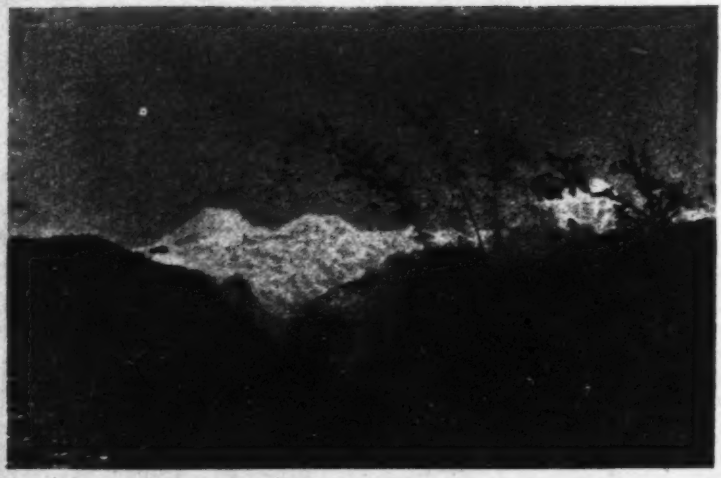

Above: TALUNG VALLEY LOOKING TOWARDS KINCHENJUNGA

Below: TALUNG VALLEY LOOKING EASTWARDS TOWARDS TIBET

[facing p. 76]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Consequently the recognised
778 habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should
776 a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps
[782] burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter —so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and
[753] his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

782 The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

778 There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular
782 lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[22] To
753 these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the
614 customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[22] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

 778

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 614
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank 823
copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed [751
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots 824]
of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 be rubbed over the body. Some men also carry a little arrow poison in a bag fastened inside their clothes over the heart. The greater number of people however do not take any of these precautions.

For the Lepchas devils are rather similar to the witches in European folklore; they are malevolent but not necessarily particularly intelligent; and there are numerous stories of devils being fooled by fairly simple devices, just as the witch was fooled in the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. There is no belief at all in ghosts or *revenants*; should the simulacrum of a dead person be seen it would be a devil in disguise. But although many people told me of having heard or seen devils, I did not hear a single story of any one seeing the dead or absent.

vii

133 This then is the landscape in which the rest of the book is set. To the south the hills rise steeply to an invisible crest; to the north the ground descends precipitously to the hidden Talung river, and then rises opposite even more steeply; behind the fairly barren hills are the peaks of Siniolchi and its eastern neighbours, jagged black rock topped with gleaming snow. At the western end of the Talung valley rises the stupendous mass of Kinchenjunga and its neighbouring peaks, Gods and the home of Gods. To the east are the green hills of Sikkim, and beyond the ragged snow-mountains which mark the frontier of Tibet.

For the European the landscape is one of overwhelming beauty, spoilt only by the very considerable difficulty of travelling about, so rocky and precipitous is the land. The picture I should like to [137] convey is of a very steep and broken series of hillsides, except in small clefts nearly bare of big trees, but almost entirely covered with low growths of shrubs and saplings of various tints of green, flecked with patches of colour at some seasons; the yellow sweet-smelling daphne *edgeworthiana*, the blue hydrangea-like flower of *dichroa febrifuga*, the rich purple of the Sikkim rose. Here and there, scattered over the hillsides, are pieces of cleared and burned land, with the larger tree-trunks standing up lopped and charred; pieces of land placed in seemingly quite arbitrary positions, with large stretches of green between them. Down in the valley the ground appears slightly more cultivated; there are roughly terraced fields fenced with bamboo hurdles, and occasional small rectangles

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of a deeper yellow-green where the cardamum grows. Scattered here and there among the prevailing greens may be seen the glow of a fruit-tree in flower, and nearby the low thatched roof of a house, barely distinguishable until you are close upon it. The paths are the faintest tracks, invisible until you come upon them; there is no main road, nothing to guide your way; except that there are usually more stones—for the bigger stones will have been removed from the neighbouring fields and piled on the path to make drier walking in the wet weather—there is little to indicate what is path and what merely rough ground. Overtowering and dwarfing all the works of man are the enormous ramparts of the gleaming snows, cutting short a quarter of the horizon in almost every direction. You can see that the land is in part cultivated and inhabited, but the part seems insignificant; in the battle between man and nature, nature seems everywhere the winner. 133 [487]

That is the landscape for the European; for the Lepcha not a single feature is the same. Except when they refer to them as the habitations of the high Gods, the Lepchas do not remember the mountains; they do not lift up their eyes, they look down on the ground. Every piece of land is meaningful for them, for every piece, unless it be the home of a supernatural, is, has been, or will be cultivated. They think and speak of their country as a poor country, demanding disproportionate labour for the food they require for themselves and their families. For them the land is not a friend; it is a material; and when they look at it they see therein the work and sweat they have fed it with all their lives. Every piece of land, every step they take, reminds them of the past and the present, of their own work and struggles, and those of their neighbours; the houses and fences they have helped to build, the land they have helped to clear and weed and harvest, the places where they have played as children, or, later, met for amorous encounter. They see too the cliffs and rocks and lonely trees where dwell the devils who menace and destroy their otherwise peaceful and happy existence; these visible signs remind them of those evil forces—disease and death, blight and famine, childlessness and enmity and quarrelling—that mar a life which, though hard enough, would otherwise be easy and friendly, full of health and happiness. The Lepchas do not see the landscape; they see the records of their lives, and of the lives of their ancestors, and of the lives to come of their children. 823

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CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FOOD

i

261. For the Lepchas, as for almost all primitive peoples, by far the most important subject in their lives is food. Far and away the greatest part of their lives is centred round food-getting; it is impossible to over-stress its importance. But because food-getting is so constant a preoccupation, and because it is fairly featureless and uneventful, it nearly always, it seems to me, receives far less attention than it deserves. The features chiefly dealt with by ethnologists, including of course the greater part of this book, are those which take place during the primitive's leisure. Some peoples, I am aware, centre their social and religious life about food; 771 but this is not the case with the Lepchas. Food-products play a considerable rôle in the objects of sacrifice, but with the lamas this aspect is not stressed; most ceremonial objects are made out of grain-flour and butter, but this is because they are the most convenient and easily accessible materials; by the time they have been fashioned the edible qualities of these objects are not apparent. A minor sacrifice is made when a new field is taken into cultivation for the first time, and prayers are said, usually by a layman, after each sowing; and the Mun make elaborate ceremonies, to be described later, yearly at the flowering of the cardamum, and at the sowing and gathering of dry rice. In the annual cycle of lamaist ceremonies there are a certain number which are devoted to the protection of crops from hail and predatory beasts, and, before the sowing starts, some seed is collected from each household and given a communal blessing at a monastery service; but these rites take an insignificant place in the yearly sum of religious ceremonies. Lepcha religion is above all occupied with health.

261 Food does however play a very important rôle in the Lepchas' 152 emotional lives. Love, whether between spouses, friends, or parents and children, is considered to be the result of mutual

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261 152 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations—are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 178 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

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some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food. 224 178

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed. 224 868 [753] 224 [834]

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224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their [439] gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphro- [178] disiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching [223 small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the 857] commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two cate-
311 gories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha
556 household depended on the energy of its members and on the proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

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misfortune. Today this is not quite so true; the creation of permanent fields requires the renunciation of immediate good for future benefits, for the household which builds these fields will not be able to get as large a harvest as would otherwise be possible. The consequence is that the difference between the richest and the poorest in the community has somewhat increased, and that households which have a proportionately larger number of working adults to dependents are in a temporarily favoured position. So of course is the Mandal,[1] who can use the free labour to which he is entitled to have terraces made for him. 461 556

Up to the present as far as I can tell this new state of affairs has made no important difference to the Lepcha community; their habits of co-operation nullify the differences in wealth. One man even went so far as to say that he would not like to be the richest person in the community, unless everybody else was equally prosperous, as he would have to give all his superfluity to help others. Extra wealth carries with it extra duties; and in point of fact the richest people in Lingthem were also the most heavily indebted. At the same time it must be emphasised that it is the desire of every Lepcha to be rich; when I asked children what they would most like to be, a clever man, or a learned and respected lama, or a great hunter, or a rich man, they would one and all plump for being rich. Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, a member of the most devout lamaist family in Lingthem, and who was himself starting his religious instruction said 'I should like to go and study religion in a Tibetan monastery, but I don't want to go to the State school at Gangtok; the things they teach you there are quite useless, while a lama always gets good presents and feasts. Why, when a rich man dies even the *kané*, the accolyte attending the officiating lama, is given a fine plate and cup and clothes!'[2] 556 [476]

Unless the whole orientation of Lepcha life is changed even greater differences in actual wealth will not fundamentally alter the situation, for there is no possibility of any Lepcha, however rich, exploiting his neighbour, however poor. Help in the work of house or field is always repaid by equivalent help; the most

[1] See Chapter Five, p. 128.

[2] Chimpet's view of the value of secular education is not shared by his father or the other more serious adult members of the community. They have petitioned the State to establish a boarding school in Zongu, for they consider that the extra work entailed by the older children's absence would be counterbalanced by the value of the education received. [871]

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556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 539 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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the tips of the *shang-no* tree, but of that tree only." The daughter went and gathered the twigs and put them into her mother's lap. Then the mother said "If I can cover the sun with these twigs I can go all over the world. Watch what I do." Then she went out on to the verandah and threw up the twigs, so that the sun was covered and she would be able to go all over the world. Then she returned to the house and said to her daughter "You had better go soon, for your maternal uncles will be coming to look for my body. They will take away three bags of jewels and only leave you three tiny necklaces; but wear those and look after them. They will take all the cattle and only leave you one baby calf; look after that. Do not be sad, for in seven days a man will come and marry you, and your children will be *Jem-mi* (that is Mandal) of this place. Now go away." The daughter did as she was told.

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'When morning broke the brothers came to fetch the corpse, but they could see nothing; only there was a trail of blood leading to a lake situated above a big tree, and behind that a cliff with a door in it. The mother entered that cliff and there she *munthen* (performed the religious contemplation of the Mun) for seven days.

'Meanwhile the brothers had divided the property just as had been prophesied; and the girl stayed with her calf and her three small necklaces in the shed; and in seven days a hunter arrived and lived with her and married her. This hunter was named Tsel-telim, and from him the Tsel-telim *ptso* sprang.[4]

'For seven days the mother *munthen* and at last she summoned the devils from their home; she vowed vengeance on all who had great wealth or many children and she sent out the devils. These devils are called Ginoo *moong pan-di* ('Queen devil Ginoo') after the name of the murderers, and Lingthem *anyou* ('Lady Lingthem') after the place of the murder.

'Within one year all the huge family had died and the door of their house was closed. Lower down in the valley was another family which had ten married sons and ten married daughters. These too Ginoo *moong* attacked and killed, all except two women called Safi and Sakyon who were weeding the distant fields. But as they were weeding they heard a voice saying "I want Safi." "I want Sakyon." The next morning when they woke up in the field house they both had elephantiasis and quickly died.

[4] See Chapter Five, p. 127. Serving is the last survivor of this *ptso* in the neighbourhood.

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773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[42] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
124] their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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has at least a couple of terraces and some considerably more. These 243
terraces are scattered all over the valley, and it is rare for two
contiguous strips to belong to the same owner. It is theoretically permissible to exchange plots so that they shall be better grouped, but nobody considers doing so.

The rice terraces are turned with a rough single-pointed wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen, as is the *sing* or field-garden near the house. Except on these artificially levelled places the ground is too precipitous for the use of a plough to be possible. Two main crops are raised in the field-garden annually; first a mixture of barley and wheat, and subsequently maize. These grains are chiefly raised as stop-gap crops, and for fermenting; maize is thought [556]
little of, and to eat much of it is the surest sign of poverty. A
number of fruits and vegetables are also raised on the edge of the 241
field-garden to give a variety of flavourings to the main rice dish; the greater number of these are importations from India, such as various varieties of pulse, tomatoes and chilli; some of them however are wild plants found locally and domesticated; such are various lavatera, arums and alliums. The collection of some of these wild plants have some ritual attached to them; the allium *safyou* for example, which is only found in one place, must be dug up with sharpened sticks; if knives are used the supernatural Jamfi *moong* will be angry and throw sticks at the collectors and cause hail and thunder. Even more unpleasant is the mountain plant *chok-li bi* (probably a sort of rhubarb) which is said to be delicious; however you gather that plant hail will fall as the stems are picked.

Cardamum is grown in small clearings all over the lower slopes 249
of the valley. It is a perennial plant propagated by cuttings which are taken in the early spring; the plant reaches its full bearing period within three years; at the end of ten years it starts to decline and new plantings have to be made; this can however be done on the same ground as the plant does not exhaust the soil. The plants need a good deal of care, and have to be hand-weeded at least three times a year, for the buds and fruit form close to the ground. When the fruit is gathered the old growth is cut down and burned. Cardamum plants are a favourite hiding-place for snakes. For the Lepchas cardamum is a foreign importation from Nepal; they always refer to it by its Nepali name—*elaiji*—and with the cultivation of the plant has come a whole complex of alien beliefs and ritual. Nothing is done when the

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249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [841] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes [783] any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

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order forbidding the destruction of trees. When all the debris has been collected the straight sticks are sorted out and the rest is put into heaps and set fire to, the ashes acting as a loosener and fertiliser of the soil. After burning, the ground is cleared of charred wood and the remaining weeds by hand and is then sown with the main crop. This is done in the simplest manner possible; holes are made in the ground with a pointed stick and the seed dropped into and round them. 243

The principal crops of these temporary fields are dry rice and millet. Twelve varieties of dry rice are named and recognised by small differences in their height, colour of seed and earlier or later ripening. Wild rice is found in the neighbourhood and most of their varieties come from seed selected from these wild plants. One of their most esteemed sorts, the 'black' rice, comes from a small amount of seed collected in the jungle by the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's father; it was grown exclusively for seed for some years and now all the villagers have a good stock of it. The seed of all crops except wet rice is saved from year to year; it is the special business of the 'house-mother' at harvest time to select and put aside the grain which will be needed for the next year's seed. The sowing and harvesting of dry rice is surrounded with an elaborate ritual which will be described later.

A great number of different millets and eleusines are cultivated. Small fields of the earlier ripening varieties are made in the valley and a big field for the main crop is grown higher up. Only one field of dry rice and one of main-crop millet are made every year. Sometimes other grains or plants are grown among these crops, a certain amount of maize or different vegetables if the field-garden cannot take enough. In the autumn, after the rice or millet is gathered, the fields are sown with buckwheat which ripens in about five months; when that is harvested the ground is allowed to lie fallow for seven years. Two sowings of buckwheat are made annually; a big one in the autumn for food, and a smaller one in the spring for seed.

Lepcha agriculture is extremely inefficient by the standard of yield per acre. It is also absolutely inefficient. I was shocked at the carelessness of the sowing, with perhaps a third of the grain lying on the bare ground and the seed in the holes inadequately covered. When I remonstrated I was told 'It doesn't matter; if all the rice were to come up it would be too thick; so that if the birds eat some it will be just right.' To prevent the birds taking too 242

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242 much a prayer is said (usually by an experienced layman) after each sowing. It is arguable that more intensive cultivation would not result in a bigger yield per hour of work; and the continuous change of ground, only possible with a light population, prevents erosion and soil exhaustion. The accompanying table shows schematically the work of the Lepcha agricultural year.

LEPCHA AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR
(for the Talung valley)

221 805 (*Note*: The Tibetan year begins in February, and the first of the Tibetan month falls on about the tenth of the English. Consequently 'February', e.g. should be interpreted as 'February 10th to March 10th.')

TANGBU (February).	Clear the ground and finish sowing buckwheat. This and the two preceding months are the period of intense cold when poor old people may die for lack of warmth.
NIBU (March)	Finish clearing ground and sow dry paddy in temporary fields; sow maize and early millet in valley. Weed cardamum in flower and strike new plants. This and the following month is the time of rain and hail-storms.
SUMGU (April)	Harvest barley and wheat. Clear ground for main-crop millet. Weed cardamum again round new-formed fruit.
ZIBU (May)	Harvest buckwheat. Sow maincrop millet. Sow maize in 'garden' burning the wheat straw for fertilising. This and the three following months are the period of constant rain and heat. Head-coverings are necessary.
NAPU (June)	Plant wet rice. Weed dry rice. This is the leanest month when people may go hungry. In this and the following month is the greatest infantile mortality, through diarrhoea and dysentery.
TIKPU (July)	Harvest earliest millets in valley. Weed maincrop millet.
DENGBU (August)	Harvest earliest variety of wet rice. Make a shed to dry cardamum fruit. Make a small sowing of buckwheat for seed.
GEBU (September)	Harvest dry rice. The women start harvesting the millet, the men the cardamum. This and the two following months are relatively dry.
GOOBU (October)	Cardamum picking continues. Wet rice is harvested. Barley, wheat and onions are sown in the 'garden'.
CHOOPU (November)	The seed-buckwheat is harvested. Cardamum is sold. This and the next two months are the prosperous period, the time of little work and much feasting, of shopping and trading expeditions. Most marriages are celebrated now.
CHUCHIKPU (December)	Taxes are paid. The harvested temporary fields must be made ready for buckwheat.
CHUNIPU (January).	The big sowing of buckwheat.

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Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

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252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

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Above: CLEARING THE GROUND OF WEEDS AND TWIGS; TOBGÉ TALKS TO CHÉLÉ

Below: PLANTING DRY RICE WITH PLANTING STICKS

N.B.—The camera was not tilted for these pictures.

[facing p. 96]

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273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [824] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

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273 not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the [231] soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has [758] medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[6] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

262 Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, [437] who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages [252] are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[6] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

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of cooking dishes and compounding the various ingredients; but on the whole the material provided is of more importance than the cooking. Except that a meal with meat is universally preferred to one without there does not seem to be any particularly favourite food; Tafoor voiced the general opinion when he said his favourite dish was *chi*. I did not get enough detailed menus to be able to state with certainty how often meat is usually eaten inside the household; from such information as I have got I should say richer people eat it three or four times a week, poor people once or twice. When it is available it is eaten in the morning and evening. 262

Lepcha diet is relatively monotonous, notably less highly spiced than the food of the Nepali or Indians; there are no devices for tempting jaded palates; food is to satisfy hunger, and enough is as bad as a meal. A feast definitely implies over-eating, and it is quite a common subject among old people to deplore that their powers of over-eating are failing; that once upon a time they could eat fourteen pounds of meat in a day, and now they cannot manage four with comfort! These actual figures were used by Adér, who is well over seventy and has lost half his teeth.

As can be seen, the Lepchas have, for a primitive people, a remarkably high standard of living, as far as food and drink is concerned; it is certainly far higher than that of the Lepchas outside Zongu or any of the neighbouring peoples that I know of. Levelling out the answers I have received and my own observations, I should say that the average consumption of grain annually by an adult Lepcha is about 400 lbs.; besides that about another 100 lbs. is consumed for *chi*. These quantities naturally do not allow for entertainment or gifts. There are three households who perhaps do not quite reach this standard, those of Dunbi, Nahyeun and Pargeut. Dunbi is said to be the poorest man in the village, but this is chiefly his own fault, for he sits about drinking and gossiping instead of working. Nahyeun is a young man fairly recently married; he is reputed to be Dunbi's bastard and is himself not over energetic. He recently married Tobgé's sister and they have set up house on their own because his wife did not agree with the two wives of Asang, with whom he formerly lived; they consequently have no reserves and few permanent fields. The third poor man, Pargeut, is really unfortunate; he has six small children of which only the two eldest are of an age to help him, and they are girls betrothed outside the village; he has also a very 511 [262] [556]

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511 old mother to support, and he suffers himself from some sort of recurrent fever.

These households, and a few others, may get short of grain in the early summer and be driven to look for food in the forest to supplement the gifts they get; most households have usually a a small surplus at the end of the year which they use for extra feasting and presents. From the point of view of crops, though not [556] necessarily of money, the richest householders are the Mandal, Tafoor, Takneum *youmi*, Tingkep and Chelim. The first two are considered to be the best hosts, at whose house the finest food and drink is obtained.

V

231 Although of secondary importance as far as diet is concerned, domestic animals play a considerable rôle in the life of the Lepchas. Nearly all the ceremonies of the Mun demand animal sacrifices; animals are essential for the socio-religious celebrations of birth, marriage and death; and consequently people with few or no animals who get ill or have children or marry or die are at a considerable disadvantage and have to borrow animals for these ceremonies. Much of the indebtedness incurred with money lenders has been for the purchase of animals. Though the Lepcha can, and often does, borrow animals from his neighbours, he appears to feel a discomfort in being indebted to a friend which he does not feel towards the money lenders.

[556] By far the most important animal is oxen;[7] they are still the chief sign of wealth and a person with twenty head of cattle is considered a rich man. Their meat is the most esteemed and at important feasts, or if a person wants to make a display, it is always an ox which is killed. They are never used as beasts of burden (no animals are so used) but occasionally for ploughing; a certain amount of milk and butter is got from milch-cows. Only the most savage bulls are castrated. Cows are not mated and no pedigrees are kept.

Except for young calves, milch cows, and bullocks temporarily in use for ploughing, the animals are never tethered or herded; they wander all over the common land round the village where pasturage and wood-gathering are free; every evening they

[7] The Lepcha cattle have no hump; they resemble small European rather than Indian cattle. They have small horns and every variety and combination of colouring.

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return by themselves to their owners' houses, where they are given a feed of salt and powdered grain. Tethered animals are also fed with gathered leaves. Each animal has its name, which it knows; unless they wander into enclosed fields they are never beaten nor spoken to roughly. As you walk about Lingthem you come upon untended cattle in every direction; and one of the strangest sights is to watch the animals returning home of an evening. A herd of cattle, perhaps a score or more, will arrive in the centre of a group of houses, and will then each turn away to their own homes; as soon as they have settled under their houses they are given their evening feed. Stranger still is the fact that during the cold months—roughly from February to April—all the cattle, except the milch-cows, are sent in an untended group into the forest up the hill behind the village. When people want their cattle back they go up the hill to the place where they are liable to congregate, or, as the Lepchas put it 'where the cattle live in the forest', usually under some noticeably big tree. Within twenty-four hours cattle which have been completely untended for four months can be collected and brought back. While the cattle are in the forest a State tax of two annas a head a month is charged.

The taming of animals so completely is a remarkable feat in itself, and is also a good symbol of the Lepchas' chief attitudes; I think it has also an important bearing on their psychological development. In neighbouring tribes herding cattle is one of the major occupations of growing boys; in this way they achieve a certain self-reliance and learn to exercise their judgement. This discipline is almost completely absent for Lepcha boys; only when predatory animals are known or suspected to be in the neighbourhood are they set to watch animals. All through his childhood and adolescence the Lepcha boy is under the supervision of, and usually in company with his elders; and I feel sure that the lack of self-reliance, the inability to stand alone, which is one of the most obvious characteristics of the young Lepcha man, is enhanced by the lack of any work specially given over to children.

The size of the herds varies very considerably. The average is about six or seven head; a few households have considerably more and some people have only one or two, or even none at all.

Goats are raised exclusively for food and sacrifice and are never milked; they are not highly esteemed and people usually only

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231 have a few pairs. All goats are fed on salt, and billy goats are also given maize. Kids, and other young animals, are never killed for food.

Pigs also are raised for eating and sacrifice, but their meat is more popular and a large number are kept. They are the only animals which are generally killed for domestic eating. They are fed on the remains of *chi* after the grain has been three times soused. It is not rare for pigs and piglets to get quite drunk on this diet; there is quite a heavy mortality among them, and also occasionally among goats, who take the food by mistake, through their falling down dead drunk. The pig would appear to be a variety of the Himalayan wild pig; it is a relatively thin black animal, covered with bristles. All boars are castrated at the age of three or four months, by which time, it is said, they will have been old enough to cover the sow once. There are two reasons for thus castrating the boars; if it is not done it is said they would become savage and wander away into the forest. But there is a greater danger than [838] this; if a man should happen to eat the flesh of an uncastrated pig he would thereupon commit sodomy. This is an example of the 811 notion of *tamtoom*, an extremely important major Lepcha idea; if two events are believed to be inevitably connected, though the actual causation of the second by the first is not obvious, the second event is said to be the *tamtoom* of the first. With our logical attitude to the external world we have no proper parallel to this notion; the nearest approach would be if our common superstitions were believed to be specific and ineluctable. If for example walking under a ladder were believed to produce, say, a financial loss, this loss would be the *tamtoom* of walking under a ladder. The two acts need not necessarily be performed by or happen to the same person; when pre-natal precautions and body-marks are discussed, it will be seen that the child often suffers the *tamtoom* of his parents' actions.

838 Sodomy is strongly anti-social—it is called *nam-toak*, an act producing a year of disaster, the term which is also applied to incest—and an extremely embarrassing subject, one of the very few people don't like discussing. There is one man in the village, Takneum *youmi*, who has twice sodomised people when he was drunk and the victim asleep. In the second case, which occurred recently, the victim was old Lharibu Chujen, himself a grandfather; he was not angry at the indignity offered and did not claim the [684] recompense of a pig and five rupees and ceremonial cleansing by a Mun to which he was entitled.

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *younì*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers.

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass.

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again.

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even un- 262 673 knowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapön*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapön* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

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428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
597 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

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be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the 428
younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property 428
permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there
is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get 597
their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple [592]
and one child, the dependent members of the household usually 422
have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

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422 The children look after and feed these animals a little, and will cry if they are sold. The parents however are at perfect liberty to sell them, if they wish to, without consulting the owner; the money is said to be set against the expenses incurred for the child's clothes. If on the other hand the parents kill the animals for sacrifice or food, they have to replace them, and any young the animals bear belong to the owner. Also when they are still very young children are given a tiny piece of land as their own field; at first the parents help them with their work, but by about the age of twelve the children are expected to be able to look after them by themselves. As the children grow older the size of their field is increased. The grain from the children's fields is harvested separately and kept in a special container, but the house-mother can use it for household purposes without consulting the child. The produce is stated to be set against the children's clothes and knife, and, in the case of young girls, jewels. In general the privately-
422 owned animals and grain are not set apart from the others in any
583 way; only when girls go to their husband's village they take with them their private animals and the last year's harvested grain as a sort of dowry. When a wife settles into her husband's home she is generally given small portions of rice terrace and cardamum field, from the proceeds of which she can buy jewels. In this manner everybody, even the youngest children, is given the appearance of being self-supporting, of feeding and clothing themselves by their own work.

422 It seems as though nearly everybody except the very poorest have a few private animals. Mrs. Datoop, one of the richer women in Lingthem, says that at her marriage she brought with her six or seven cattle and other animals. She now owns ten head of cattle, three rice terraces, and two cardamum fields which yield about sixteen maunds; she bought her very fine jewels with the proceeds. When her two daughters were married each took with her a pair of each sort of animal, a big copper pot, and jewels which had been bought from the proceeds of their grain and animals. Her daughter-in-law Mrs. Pembu, brought with her when she was married oxen, goats, chickens and crops; but most of these have been used for the household, and now she only claims as her own two pigs and three chickens. Her jewels are all presents from relatives. Since she and her husband are the sole owners of their property she has no private land.

Chimpet, Tafoor's oldest son, aged fourteen, owns a pig given

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

174 categories—food-gatherers, cultivators, and herders.[12] In a way the Lepchas today straddle all three types, though domestic animals play a relatively small part in their economy.

Lepcha tradition, as has already been stated, places the transition from food-gathering to cultivating about two centuries ago. But I question whether this statement can be taken at its face value. It is extremely difficult to count on the age of tradition or mythology, but it seems to me *ipso facto* improbable that the Mun mythology would have been completely changed and re-made after the Lepchas' conversion to lamaism. Now in the Mun ritual and validating mythology domestic animals play a very important part for they are the only acceptable articles of sacrifice; wild animals can only be used by hunters. Also the most constant and important of the Mun's calendrical ceremonies are connected with crops, and in particular with dry rice and millet. These are ceremonies which affect the whole population. There is also the tradition that, while the upper slopes of the valley were common ground until quite recent times, the land down by the river has been privately owned from time immemorial. The private ownership of uncultivated land which would never be particularly rich in game seems quite pointless.

It seems to me probable that up to about three centuries ago the Lepchas—presuming they were already living in the same country, and there seems no reason to question it—cultivated a certain amount of rice and millet on the lower slopes of the valley, probably selecting the wild varieties which grow in the Himalayan forests, and kept some domestic animals, probably oxen. They very likely did not cultivate enough for all their needs, and eked out the cultivated food with hunting and wild forest produce. When the tribes of Tibet, and later of Nepal, amalgamated into single states with expansionist policies, the Lepchas found themselves confronted with war-like enemies against whom they were practically defenceless, for in their lonely Himalayan valleys they can have seen few strangers. There is no account of their resisting the Tibetan colonisation, but they fled from the invading Nepali and Bhutanese. These foreigners represented for them death and slavery, at the least loss of their possessions; and so to save themselves they abandoned their cultivation and took to a nomadic life in the forests. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth

[12] See for example C. Daryll Forde's *Habitat, Economy and Society* (London 1934).

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

century Sikkim was, we know, the seat of constant wars; and it is not surprising that old Serving claims that about 1850 there were only four houses in Lingthem. As the country became peaceful the Lepchas settled down again to a mainly agricultural life, only to find, outside Zongu, that they were unable to compete with the more industrious and competent Nepali and Sikkimese. They had developed a way of life suitable for isolation; neither in war nor in competition could they stand up to other people. In the reserve of Zongu the introduction this century of cardamum and terraced fields bound them more securely to the land. They had neither time nor reason for hunting. The money-producing cardamum crop did away with the necessity, which existed in earlier times, of travelling to trade forest produce against cloth and salt and metal. From partial or complete nomadism the Lepchas have become almost completely attached to their fields; they have less reasons for dealing with strangers than at any time in the last three centuries. It is probable that this growing isolation will increase even more the Lepcha's great natural timidity in the face of an unknown person; even today 'unknown' has almost the same connotations as 'dangerous'. 174

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CHAPTER FOUR

MONEY LENDERS AND TRADING FRIENDS

i

426 439 At Mangan, on the main mule road between Tibet and Gangtok, above the only solid bridge which connects Zongu with the mainland, are a group of half-a-dozen mixed stores. These stores are owned by Indians, members of the Mahawari caste, a caste of hereditary money lenders and misers. They have been settled in the neighbourhood about thirty years; before Mangan was developed they lived at Singthem. Ostensibly they are only shopkeepers; in point of fact their chief profit is made by advancing cash and goods to the neighbouring peasants against their produce. Formerly they used to deal with every sort of crop, but since the introduction of cardamum they have concentrated exclusively on that. The State has given these traders, or, as they are locally called, kanya, the monopoly of the cardamum trade, and they are therefore able to impose a uniform price.

The presence of these kanya in the neighbourhood has been an almost unmitigated disaster for the Lepchas. Were they honest it would still be bad, for their proximity has to a considerable extent sapped the Lepchas' energy. It is easier to buy ready-made clothes than to go long journeys to obtain thread and then spin and make up the cloth; and so they buy cheap and shoddy cloth and ready-made clothes; they are colder, dirtier and more ragged than they used to be and their children die of bronchial complaints. In the lean summer months it is easier to get grain on credit than to search for food in the forest; and so, through the line of least resistance they get more and more heavily into debt.

The Lepchas are at a complete disadvantage in dealing with the kanya. Neither they nor anybody outside the caste can read the peculiar script of the Mahawari; but the Lepchas cannot deal with figures and are unable to calculate the prices they should

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 receive or the debts they owe; when they get receipts they cannot
read them nor tell if they are correct. Though they have a strong
439 conviction that they are badly cheated by the kanya they can do nothing about it; intentional dishonesty in any form is so alien to them that they cannot comprehend or deal with it; they puzzle about the sums that the kanya say they owe; they are convinced that they are too high, but they cannot dispute them and have to pay. Since the kanya have the cardamum monopoly and collect the selling tax the Lepchas cannot take their produce elsewhere; and it is questionable if it would pay them to do so, for against the higher prices obtainable in Gangtok and Kalimpong must be set the cost of porterage. As with many such crops the price is often higher at the end of the season than at the beginning, but the kanya will not let them wait on the market; at the beginning of the season they send representatives to their debtors claiming immediate payment, and threatening Court proceedings if the cardamum is not forthwith handed over. If the kanya would give cash for the surplus crop the Lepchas would be better off; but it is extremely difficult to get ready money, beyond what is needed for tax-paying, out of them. When the cardamum is brought in the kanya claim that they have no money to hand and force goods, either metal ware, or china, or cloth, on to the sellers. And if during the rest of the year people come in to buy goods, rice seed, or cloth, or salt, they refuse to take cash except for quite small sums (say under Rs. 10). They bully and force and persuade the Lepchas to take goods on credit whether they want them or not.

426 Their rates of interest are extortionate. For a maund of rice or Rs. 10 worth of shop goods they demand a maund of cardamum. The cash price of rice at Mangan is Rs. 5/12; the present price of cardamum is Rs. 12 and it has been considerably higher. If there is not sufficient cardamum to pay the debt at harvest time the arrear is carried forward at a maund-and-a-half for a maund, or Rs. –/6 for Rs. 1. The rate of interest charged on loans comes to 25% per year at the lowest. According to a reliable informant outside Zongu I was told that according to the laws of Sikkim State no interest is allowed to be charged on goods sold on credit and a maximum of 12½% on cash loans.

Some years ago, it is said, a complaint was made to the Central Court that the kanya were using false measure, taking off 5 seers in the maund (10 lbs. in 80); the kanya were fined Rs. 3,000 and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

they told the Lepchas that they would take it out of them; it is the opinion of the most intelligent of them that they are doing so. The Court has made various rules to try and control the devices of the kanya. Nowadays they are not allowed to make out the bills themselves and if the Lepchas were literate this would be a great help; as it is it is usually the postmaster who makes out the bill and the debtor puts his thumb mark on it. Nowadays too during the buying season there is an official checker—a Nepali. An application was made to Court in the spring of 1937 to have the kanya removed because their proximity was the chief reason for the indebtedness and distress. Some years ago the Court sent out an order that people were not to borrow so much and the kanya were not to cheat so much; but with the shops there on the spot and with cunning and insinuating salesmen, the Lepchas are unable to resist.

426

With the exception of, I think, only one household (Nariya and Rigya) everybody in Lingthem is indebted to the kanya; the average debt is between Rs. 20 and Rs. 100, but some people are much more heavily indebted. The biggest single debt is that left by Tafoor's father the Muktair; this amounted to Rs. 1,200 and was chiefly contracted through the expense he incurred in rebuilding and re-furnishing the monastery, though a certain amount went to the improvement of his own house and the entertainment of distinguished guests and of the workers from distant villages who helped in the monastery building. Before his death the Mandal organised a village feast for him at which everybody gave cash gifts according to their ability; but the sum was too great for the neighbourhood to liquidate. His heirs, Tafoor and Chudo, have commuted the debt, arranging to pay off both principal and interest at the rate of six maunds of cardamum each every year for ten years. Their personal debts are quite small, and are regulated at the end of each year. Of living people probably the most indebted is the Mandal, who owes about Rs. 500, also chiefly borrowed for entertainment. After him comes Katel; the principal of his debt nobody knows, not even he himself; but out of the sixty maunds of cardamum he harvests (this is almost the biggest crop of anybody in the village) forty have to go in debt.

To illustrate the way the indebtedness works I propose giving the complete history of two debts. In 1933 Datoop incurred considerable expense on account of the funeral of his father's fifth wife, who was a nun, and of his eldest son's marriage. He

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426 therefore borrowed Rs. 100. Since 1933 he has made the following payments :—

1934	2 maunds of cardamum	at Rs. 8 –	Rs. 16
1935	3 " "	at Rs. 10 –	Rs. 30
1936	5 " "	at Rs. 12 –	Rs. 60
			Rs. 106
	Less tax at Rs. –/12		Rs. 7/8
			Rs. 98/8

He is told that he still owes Rs. 40, but he hopes this year if the price and harvest is good, to clear off the debt. He does not know what interest is charged : ' nobody can work it out, and you have to pay what the kanya claim. You *can* get cash from them, but it is very hard to do so ; they push goods on to you and try to force you to take them.'

Thirteen years ago, when his step-father died, Kurma *gyapõn* borrowed Rs. 100 for the funeral expenses. Cardamum was fetching a high price then ; the next year he gave four maunds and asked the kanya to tear up the bill. Apparently he just tore up a piece of paper, for the next year he reclaimed the money, and as Kurma had no receipt he could not dispute the bill. For a couple of years he did nothing about it and then the kanya sent a policeman to bring him to Court ; Kurma protested that as he had already paid the bill he would go directly to the Maharajah and present the case to him ; and with that intention he took with him a hurricane lantern and an umbrella. The policeman left him at Mangan and Kurma went to buy oil for his lantern ; the kanya saw him and asked what he was doing ; to which Kurma replied that he was setting out for Gangtok to present his case to the Maharajah. The kanya suggested that this was a little drastic, and suggested that he go and fetch Balyoop of Panung to act as an intermediary. Finally a compromise was arranged whereby the debt—both principal and interest—was set at a fixed sum to be paid off at the rate of one maund a year ; Kurma believes that the full value of the maund is being written off. Today he still owes Rs. 40.

Until very recent years the kanya were able to send the police of their own accord to distrain animals and jewels against long-standing debts ; nowadays they are only allowed to do so after an

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

award from the Chief Court at Gangtok. About ten years ago the kanya sent their servants to seize Songpo *youmi*'s cattle and his wife's jewels; but the Mandal stood security for the cattle with his own cardamum and neighbours clubbed together to redeem the jewels. About the same time Patek's father had two bullocks and a milch-cow distrained; fifteen householders banded together to stand security and returned the animals to their owner. Only three years ago the kanya attempted to sell by auction three orange trees, a rice terrace and a cardamum field belonging to Tempa, who had an outstanding debt of Rs. 100. This however was a complete failure for nobody bid at the auction except Tempa himself; he bought back his property at Rs. 60 which cleared his debt. In 1937 a man of Panung had a cardamum field sold by auction, but this was after judgement had been given against him at Court; he and the kanya had both been found guilty of buying and selling cardamum without paying the sales tax. In this case the field was bought by a man of Lik across the river, who paid off the debt and now uses the field as his own.

426

It is only the internal co-operation of the Lepchas and the paternalistic rulings of the Court which have prevented the Mahawari getting a stranglehold on the lives of the Lepchas of Zongu such as they hold over nearly every Indian peasant and piece of ground. They are such a powerful caste and so incalculably rich that they appear to be able to defy all governments, whether British or Native; they together with the Kabuli and the other leeches are far and away the greatest cause of misery, distress and poverty in the whole Indian sub-continent.

There are also debts inside the village, but they are of a very different nature. If a person is short of crops he will borrow from a neighbour. If he returns the loan within a year he has no interest to pay, if over a year he must repay three measures for every two borrowed, for it is considered that the seed will have produced a harvest. If an animal is borrowed it will simply be replaced or its equivalent in cash given in due course. If the repayment is long postponed a chicken and a load of *chi* will be given when the debt is repaid. There is no interest on cash loans for the first year; after that there is an interest of Rs. –/3 on the rupee and a feast should be given by the debtor to the creditor every year. If after, say, three years the debtor finds that he can only repay the principal he will bring the money, together with a dead fowl and a load of *chi* to the creditor and ask for the interest to be remitted; this is

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 439 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used [386 314] to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingʒong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingʒong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyou-faat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingʒong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingʒong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingʒong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

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Once the full ceremony has been performed the two *ingʒong* are regarded as being in truth sons of one father, and intermarriage between their descendants is forbidden as incestuous for nine generations. The relationship between one *ingʒong* and his *ingʒong*'s wife is a respectful one, and to mark his respect he will usually address her as 'mother'. It would be almost incestuous to sleep with your *ingʒong*'s wife, but a woman does not have to hide from her husband's *ingʒong* as is the case with the *mit* of Nepal.[2] As a general rule the *ingʒong* relationship is hereditary, the sons of *ingʒong* being themselves *ingʒong*; but there is no compulsion about this and if a son does not get on with his father's *ingʒong* and his sons he can set up new relationships. Even with hereditary *ingʒong* the full ceremonial must be performed in each generation.

Nowadays the Lepchas only set up the relationship with Sikkimese and Tibetans, for the exchange of crops and dye-wood for salt, carpets and metal vessels; they are, they say, no longer friendly with the Nepali and will have no relationships with them. *Ingʒong* is not an exclusive relationship. At the end of March a Sikkimese-Tibetan husband and wife from Lachen arrived in Lingthem with rugs which they wished to exchange for crops, dye-wood and cash. In the whole Talung valley they had eleven *ingʒong*, three of whom were in Lingthem; they spent one night in the house of each. When an *ingʒong* arrives on a visit efforts are made to feast him as well as possible; and when Lepchas go to visit their *ingʒong* they take with them presents of grain, and, if possible, meat. Most of the men of Lingthem have at least three Sikkimese or Tibetan *ingʒong*.

Properly speaking the term *ingʒong* is only applicable to the ceremonial trading-relationship set up between Lepchas and foreigners; but the word is very frequently used between Lepchas with the meaning 'my special friend.' It sometimes happens that two men will drink *chi* together ceremoniously to give some formality to their relationship; but they do not perform the full ceremony for that would entail the nine-generation marriage ban, and in the small community of Zongu, where the choice of wives is already limited, this would speedily produce an impossible state of affairs. It took me a considerable time to straighten out the different implications of the term *ingʒong*, for the word is in constant use,

[2] For this fact and for other details in this book concerning the Nepali I am indebted to information derived from Mr. C. J. Morris, either in conversation or from his book '*Gurkhas*' *Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Delhi 1936).

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572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

iii

648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sent to the Mandal, who then makes up his mind as to which boys are the most suitable and then goes through the formality of consulting the parents. This is really only a formality, for the Mandal will choose the most suitable boys, and there is usually a very limited choice.

Datoop's eldest son, Pembu, spent nearly eleven years in Gangtok in the Maharajah's palace, first going there when he was a very little boy; he lived with a distant 'aunt'. He rose to be a footman and received quite good wages; he finally left owing to a dispute with his 'aunt' and 'uncle'. Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, when he was about fifteen, spent a year as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchen; at the end of that time he ran away because he was forced to kill chickens almost every day, and for one coming from such a pious family of lamas this sinful act was intolerably painful. He apparently showed some aptitude, for the cook tried to persuade him to stay so that he could take his place. When he first returned home Chudo exhibited a certain fussiness about cleanliness and such like follies, but he soon grew out of them. He made no attempt to introduce 'European style' cooking which he considered a complete waste of time. Both he and Pembu were married shortly after their return home and they have settled back completely into their society.

Such is not the case with Pichi, Datoop's second son, and Bahada, Ongden's second son, both of whom spent three years in the State carpentry school at Gangtok. They received their training and free board and lodging; in repayment they have to hold themselves and their skill at the disposition of the State, and to go wherever they are needed. In the spring of 1937 these two were only lately returned home and both seemed rather disgruntled at the change. Pichi, who was taken ill and had elaborate exorcisms performed over him, privately expressed considerable scepticism. Most disquieting of all, they refused to accept the marriages which had been arranged for them; when they wanted to get married, they said, they would choose their wives for themselves. In the face of their obstinacy their elders were powerless; but it was felt and said that this modern self-reliance would come to no good. It is possible that in a few years' time they, like their elders who underwent similar experiences, will settle down comfortably into their native society; at the moment both of them are rather seriously maladjusted.

Except for such State servants, and for the Mandal and those

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

1/84 Except for such state servants[1], and for the Mandal and those who accompany him to Gangtok to take in the taxes, the Lepchas of Zongu have little call to travel; they occasionally go to shop in Gangtok or to visit their *ingzong* on the Tibetan border; but it would seem as if such journeys are undertaken for the love of change, rather than for any real necessity.

Twelve years ago a party of six men and two women, including Tafoor, his father the Muktair, and his uncle the second Dorjé Lapoon went on a pilgrimage to the valley of Kathmandhu in Nepal. They were away for two months, spending twenty-three days on the journey each way; in India they travelled by train, which surprised but did not frighten them. As far as I know Tafoor is the only young Lepcha of Lingthem who has been outside Sikkim; a number of the older men visited Darjeeling and Tibet in their youth.

1 [i.e., servants to the Maharajah and men trained as State carpenters.—Analyst]

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CHAPTER FIVE

LAW AND ORDER

i

Zongu, as part of the Maharajah of Sikkim's private estate, is administered for him by one of the Kazi, or hereditary ministers and landowners. It is at present under the Rhennock Kazi, who has succeeded the Mali Kazi. Except on very rare occasions the Kazi does not visit the reserve; the Mandals and Muktair pay relatively frequent visits to Gangtok to pay over the taxes to him and to consult him on any problems of internal administration.

Administratively Zongu is divided into twelve villages, each with a Mandal[1] at its head. Until the beginning of this century there were no intermediaries between the Mandals and the Kazi in charge; but some thirty years ago, at the instance of the Maharani, the aunt of the present Maharajah, the office of Muktair[2] was instituted. The Muktair is superior to the Mandals; he can deal with misdemeanours carrying a fine of not more than Rs. 60, while the Mandals can only deal with fines of Rs. 30 or less; he has to supervise all tax-accounts, and visits each village twice yearly to inspect the fields and see that grain has not been planted in excess of the amount on which tax has been paid; he has also to make a register of births and deaths. At first he was also responsible for the collection of taxes, but Tafoor's father, when he held the office, made a muddle of this job, and the actual collection and payment of the monies reverted to the Mandals. I was told that the Muktair receives as salary 4 per cent of the money collected and 4 annas on each house, but the sum seems to me excessive.

The history of this office of Muktair gives a good illustration of

[1] The term *Mandal* is not a Lepcha nor even a Sikkimese word. It is the common word for the head of the village throughout Northern India. It is however in universal use among the Lepchas, having completely displaced the Sikkimese-Tibetan *La-chen* and the Lepcha *Jem-mi*.

[2] The Sikkimese-Tibetan term is *Tong-yoop*.

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636 the workings of Lepcha democracy. The original appointee of the Maharani was a Tibetan (or Sikkimese; the Lepchas do not distinguish the two races) who lived at Hi; but the Lepchas did not like having a stranger set over them and asked for the office to be given to Lepchas; the Court, which is always sensitive to such petitions, acquiesced, and the office was split into two: the seven villages on the Teesta side were put in charge of a man of Hi, and the five on the Talung side in charge of Tafoor's father. The man at Hi fulfilled the office satisfactorily, and his son is now the Muktair of the whole of Zongu; he is a youngish man and has so far no male children; he gives general satisfaction in his performance of the office.

When Tafoor's father died in 1935 Tafoor should normally have succeeded him. There were however some objections to his taking the office; he could not read or write Nepali or Sikkimese, in which all official business is transacted, but only ecclesiastical Tibetan. Even more important was the fact that he was the only relatively young lama who was sufficiently learned to be able to direct the monastery when the present old Dorjé Lapoon died; and he was 789 the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who had the requisite knowledge and who had gone through the mystic training necessary 636 for the stopping of rain and hail. This power is firmly believed in by the lamaists of Tibet and Sikkim, and in the extremely rainy Talung valley is a most useful and necessary accomplishment. If Tafoor had become Muktair he would not have had the necessary time for these religious pursuits, and therefore, somewhat against Tafoor's private desires, the householders requested that he might be allowed to continue his ecclesiastical work.

636 While the matter was still undecided the Rhennock Kazi and the Political Officer came to stop at the *dak*-bungalow at Singhik. An individual called Tempa from Lingthem went and offered his services to them, and with his fluent Nepali and Tibetan made himself very useful. At the end of their visit he asked the Rhennock Kazi to appoint him Muktair of the five Talung villages, and the request was granted.

Tempa is a man of forty-four who was born in Savong near Gangtok, well outside Zongu. He claims to be a pure Lepcha, but both his character and appearance are different to the Lepchas of Zongu. He was the only man in Lingthem to have any facial hair; he had a straggling fringe of coarse black beard round his face. When he was about fifteen he became a coolie of the present

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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents. 636

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true. [576]

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate 578 626 63

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578 626 636

objects. He is one of the very rare people in Lingthem who habitually hits animals. Finally, after he had been Muktair for about six months he assaulted with his stick old Takneum *youmi*, beating him after an argument about a matter of no importance. Immediately after this an agitation was started to get rid of him. The first person to make the discontent vocal was an old man of Tasso, in no way directly connected with either of the parties of the dispute. The Mandals of the five villages consulted together, and then each Mandal held meetings of all the adults where the matter was discussed in the greatest detail; these meetings were held in Lingthem monastery and at the houses of the different Mandals.

While these discussions were taking place, Tempa, though officially the superior of the Mandals, was forbidden by them to be present at any feasts or public gatherings either in the monastery or in private houses. Finally it was decided that so violent and irresponsible a man was unsuitable in a position of authority. A petition signed by all the householders of the district demanded that Tempa be removed from his office; they explained that he was using unjustifiable violence; they said that he was a stranger and did not know their ways; and they requested that the second office of Muktair be abolished and that the Muktair of Gyatong should in future administer their territory also. The Court granted their request, after which Tempa, reduced from all authority to the position of a private householder, was readmitted to the communal feasts and gatherings. No lasting animosity was displayed against Tempa but everybody knows the history and draws the moral; Tempa was angry, but being faced with complete unanimity he could do nothing. Today he is still angry with Takneum *youmi* and the two never visit each other on any occasion; they will, however, eat together in neutral places without quarrelling. This possibility of exclusion is the major Lepcha sanction; the person who is not allowed to feasts and who is not visited, who is in fact 'sent to Coventry' leads a very dull and lonely life; but more than that, if he is not allowed to help other people other people will not help him and it is hard to get through the agricultural and domestic work without help. Similar pressure, it is said, is brought to bear whenever anybody in authority, whether that authority be hereditary or through Court appointment, shows any tendency to abuse his position. It is a most effective control.

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ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

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622 his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower
[736] from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tamtoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

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177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

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CHALA MANDAL, THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE

TEMPA, THE DEPOSED MUKTAIR

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[636]

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622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 584

With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

622 538

manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between the two parties.

This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

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622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so
[538] foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater importance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture;
[183] for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with
781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapōn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

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entail directly or indirectly the slaughter of animals. In some villages the two offices are combined in a single holder, but in Lingthem they are kept quite distinct. The office of *youmi* is undoubtedly the older, as the linguistic evidence shows; for *youmi* is a Lepcha word and *gyapōn* Sikkimese-Tibetan; nor is there a Lepcha equivalent, the only other term used being the general north-Indian *karbari*. I have no evidence as to the time when the specific work of *gyapōn* was distinguished; in Lingthem the office has existed at least three generations.

In Lingthem the *youmi* are selected from those who have already held the office of *gyapōn*; they consist of old and experienced men who assist the Mandal with their advice and efforts in his various works; they also with the *gyapōn* try to compose quarrels or minor misdemeanours without bringing them to the official notice of the Mandal. *Youmi* are selected by the Mandal in consultation with all the responsible householders; as one *youmi* gets too old, or wishes to give up work, or dies, the Mandal nominates another from the ex-*gyapōn* to replace him. In Lingthem itself there are three *youmi*; Takneum, Songpo and Ashyok. There is also a separate *youmi* in Panung and a fifth at Liklyang across the river. The *youmi* have no privileges of any sort beyond such prestige as the title gives, but they also have comparatively little work.

The chief work on the administrative side of the village falls on the *gyapōn*. Each householder in turn has to hold the office for three years; a sort of rota is established, and people know for some time beforehand when their turn of office falls due. The work is distinctly arduous; it entails the actual collection of the taxes, the summoning of all citizens for ceremonies or when collective work for a village (for example bridge- or road-repairing, or carrying loads) is required, the collection of grain from each house for communal ceremonies and the prevention of crime and quarrelling. A great deal of the *gyapōn's* time is taken up in communal business, and consequently their own work and cultivation may have to be somewhat neglected; except for such rare characters as enjoy the power of commanding their neighbours the office holds no advantages. It is clearly stated that it is part of the duty of a householder to undertake this arduous and unrewarding work for his fellows; on that condition will his fellows in their turn look after him. The present *gyapōns* in Lingthem are Kurma and Tinkep. Their term of office finishes in the early autumn of 1937 and they will be replaced by Agyung, the adopted son of Serving,

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624 and Itup the son of Takneum *youmi*. There is also a *gyapōn* in Panung and one in Liklyang.

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[622] The objects of the four above-named offices are twofold; the regulation of intra-village affairs and the collection of taxes for the State. Within the village crime has to be prevented and possibly punished, quarrels stopped, and the poor and needy helped.

651 There is a fixed tax of Rs. 5 a year on each house, a small tax on certain grain seeds which are sown for crops and a sales tax on the cardamum fruit, which is regulated according to the price fetched and automatically deducted at selling.[5] The total tax payable by the fifty houses under Chala Mandal's jurisdiction is Rs. 3500, averaging Rs. 70[6] per household. The money is collected by the *gyapōn* and taken by the Mandal to Gangtok. Although the payment of the taxes is somewhat resented, especially by the older men, it does not seem to me to bear hardly on the Lepchas. Both money and the cash-producing crop of cardamum were introduced together at the beginning of this century—formerly taxes were paid in kind—and everybody grows more than sufficient cardamum to pay their taxes. There are nevertheless some arrears of taxes in Lingthem; indeed a couple of households are seven years in arrear, and that not through poverty but through fecklessness. So feckless are they that the Mandal has threatened that if they do not pay by the next year he will refuse to be responsible for them, in which case they will be summoned to the chief Court in Gangtok. Generally

[5] The actual taxes on seed are as follows:—

Wet rice	Rs. –/8 on 8 lbs.
Millet and maize	Rs. –/12 on 8 lbs.
Dry rice	Rs. 1/– on 32 lbs.

Other crops are not taxed. The tax on cardamum is graduated according to the selling price per maund of 80 lbs.

If the maund fetches	Rs. 10/–	the tax is	Rs. –/14
" " "	Rs. 20/–	"	Rs. 1/8
" " "	Rs. 40/–	"	Rs. 2/8.

This tax has recently been reduced. Formerly it was at Rs. 2/8 at under Rs. 20, and Rs. 5/– over that sum. The 1936 price of cardamum was Rs. 12/– a maund. There is also a small tax, not very efficiently collected, on animals pastured in, or produce gathered from the forest.

[6] About £5 7 0 or 26 dollars.

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the Mandal makes up outstanding debts as far as he can out of his own property. 651

If through misfortune or poverty a man falls behind with his taxes the Mandal will advise him to collect materials for a feast. At this feast, called *hloang-ɿok*, the guests will contribute presents of money according to their ability, the money contributed being considered as an absolute gift, and not as a loan. In the last three years three people have thus been cleared of debt by voluntary contributions.

Actual crime takes up very little time. The only generally authenticated murder in the neighbourhood took place two centuries ago; but there are fairly constant rumours and suspicions of poisoning, and at least one instance of suspected foul play[7] which have to be cleared up. 674

In Lingthem an old widowed nun, Hlatam, the mother of Aga, is generally believed to possess a mysterious slow-acting 'poison,' which either she, or one of her ancestors, is said to have obtained from the Plains people. So strong was this suspicion that twenty years ago the Mandal had her seized while she was working in the fields; she was brought to the monastery where she was given a complete body search by some women, while the *youmi* and *gyapõn* ransacked her house: no trace of any poison was found, and after the accusation she prayed in the monastery, calling on the Gods to kill her if she possessed any poison. 754

Nevertheless the majority of the people of Lingthem still believe that she possesses poison. Chala Mandal says it is both a folly and a sin to call her a poisoner; there is no evidence of her murderous activities, there would be no advantage in her pursuing them and anyhow, where could she obtain the poison? Jiroong and one or two others agree with the Mandal, but the great majority take up the attitude that there is no smoke without fire, and some implicitly believe in her poisoning and are too frightened to take food or drink from her hands. Thus the lama Tafoor says that when he has to go to her house for a ceremony he makes it quite clear that he has come as a priest, and tells her that if he is ill subsequently everybody will know who to blame. Kurma believed that his second wife and her father were both killed by Hlatam; both died of stomach trouble which started almost immediately after receiving food from her, though death did not ensue till some months later.

This poison is considered to have partially natural and partially

[7] See Book Three. Chapter Fifteen pp. 402–403.

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754 supernatural qualities. The poison is meant to be a solid substance, but it does not act unless Hlatam has evil intentions towards the person to whom she gives it. Neither poison nor ill-will are sufficient by themselves; the combination of the two is necessary. The possession of this poison carries certain disadvantages; it cannot be got rid of, for then the supernatural attached to it would destroy the person who threw it away; and it is also necessary to employ it once ever so often or the supernatural will attack the possessor; if no external enemy is the victim it must be given to somebody in the owner's household.

Those who believe in the poison think that before she dies Hlatam will give the poison to her son Aga. If he were to proclaim her guilt during her life-time, people might trust him after her death; if however he says nothing they will fear him, even though he go through the gesture of throwing the poison into the water. Aga is almost the nastiest person in Lingthem; he has a squint and a sullen and leering expression, and is one of the few people on whom Lepchas are willing to pronounce moral judgements; two said of him vehemently that he was evil-minded. I considered him below average intelligence and somewhat malicious; it is possible that the universal fear and suspicion of his mother has rendered him surly and malevolent. Hlatam herself seemed a cheerful and rather bawdy-minded old lady, ever ready to joke; outside her own house people did not distinguish her in any way, but the majority said they were frightened to visit her and would not take food from her hands unless she tasted it first.

754 I personally do not believe in Hlatam's 'poisoning'; it reminds
152 me of the accusation of Mary Baker Eddy that her third husband was killed by 'arsenical poison mentally administered'.[8] At the same time it has seemed worth while to treat the subject fully for it is almost the only instance of suspected (and possibly repressed and transferred) aggression among the Lepchas. As will be seen later, all misfortunes, whatever their nature, are generally ascribed to the action of supernaturals, and even personal aggression is usually represented as being outside the aggressor's control. Hlatam has been converted into a sort of scape-goat; among Lepchas even motivated aggression is socially disapproved of; Hlatam is believed to exercise almost motiveless malevolence. In general theory her 'poison' is said to be useful for acquiring property and securing revenge; but in the case of her actual named victims there was no

[8] See *Mrs. Eddy* by E. F. Dakin. (London Scribner's 1929.) pp. 166–168, 227.

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property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's 754
family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam.
Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of 152
naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable
psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of [578]
unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, 685
if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

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685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of
[756] getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are
793 considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

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NINETY - YEAR - OLD SERVING, THE OLDEST MAN IN LINGTHEM

[facing p. 136]

TAKNEUM *YOUMI*, WHO ATE BOAR-PIG

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754 has been smeared with blood and arrow-poison, and inscribed with
793 the victim's name and a spell written in Tibetan characters (the spell itself is believed to be in Burmese). This is put into a bamboo *patyoot* and is then offered to a man-eating devil, together with *cherkem*, consisting of grain floating in *chi* and blood, and other offerings. When the sorcerer is apprised of the arrival of the devil, either by a dream or by seeing him in reality he says to it 'So and so is my enemy, and I give his flesh to you to eat'; after that the bamboo is buried near one of the devil's houses. To make a person ill a quite simple ceremony is performed inside the monastery.

Tafoor, who told me about these rituals, is one of the three lamas of the neighbourhood who know how to perform them; the other two are the two Dorjé Lapoon, who received the knowledge from learned Tibetan lamas. Tafoor has never practised himself, and is not sure if the first Dorjé Lapoon ever did, but his uncle, the second Dorjé Lapoon, who taught him, has killed two people by sorcery. The first was when he was a student; a man came to his teacher and asked him to sorcerise somebody for him, and the teacher told his pupil to try his hand. The second instance was many years later, when his knife was stolen at a monastery feast; the thief, though he did not know it at the time, was one of the second Dorjé Lapoon's young pupils; the pupil did not know that the sorcery had been started against him or he could have averted it by returning the knife; only after his death, three months later, was his identity known and the lost knife recovered.

Nowadays the second Dorjé Lapoon refuses to perform sorcery any longer. The Maharajah has issued stringent orders forbidding the practice, and he himself, when on pilgrimage to Kathmandhu, made a vow not to indulge further in such wicked acts. Some time ago both Tafoor and Takneum *youni* had cardamum fruit stolen and asked the second Dorjé Lapoon to sorcerise the thieves; but he replied that it was wicked to kill a man and that thieves should be dealt with by the police. According to lamaist ethics, it is a sin to kill a man by sorcery, but not a grievous sin if the lama afterwards
[688] helps his victim's soul to heaven. To kill a man with weapons is a far greater sin; for every person's body is the home of a hundred small gods called Tamba Rigya, and they are destroyed with the body.

About eighteen years ago the husband of Pumri—now the wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon, but at that time his uncle's wife—had a goat stolen; he found some of the stolen meat and brought

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754 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he
793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/–. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman
[586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapōn* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die. 685

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12] 627 [689]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:— [582]

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

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627 it will be presumed that this is owing to the malevolent action of a supernatural, and exorcism will be resorted to.

It may happen, however, that the quarrel is of a more serious nature and consists of accusations and counter-accusations. Should such a quarrel break out there is a whole apparatus for patching it up without official notice being taken of it; should the Mandal hear of it in his official capacity, worse still should it go to the Court, it would be a terrible thing; there would be strict punishment and bad blood and that would be a slur on the community.

When a quarrel does break out the *gyapōn* will in the first instance go to both houses to find out the cause of the quarrel, and, if possible, to a third neutral person as witness. He talks diplomatically to both parties, softening each other's version of the incident; if he can make peace in this way all three will drink *chi* together and that is the end of the matter. If, however, the two parties persist in quarrelling (owing to a sense of injury) the *gyapōn* will instruct both parties to prepare *chi* and to have a certain sum of money ready—always considerably larger than what would actually be needed—in order to make the people realise the seriousness of their offence.

Chi takes about eight or nine days to be ready, and while it is brewing the *gyapōn* consults with the *youmi*; they then make another effort to compose the quarrel without calling in the Mandal. The three adjudicators take a statement from each party and then, unless the blame is obviously on one side, they call them together and threaten them that if they do not make peace, they will be very heavily fined (say Rs. 25 from each of them). The sum demanded is calculated to be beyond their reach, so that they beg the *youmi* and *gyapōn* not to proceed further; whereupon the *gyapōn* agrees to be contented with a much lesser sum, say Rs. 2/8 from each, or if they have no money, with a copper vessel or plate or anything of equivalent value. After that the two quarrellers and the three adjudicators eat and drink *chi* together; at the end of the feast the two quarrellers are given a wordy and imposing sermon on the duty of living amicably at peace one with another; at the end of the sermon the fines are returned and the whole matter is at an end.

627 578 In the last three years in Lingthem there have been two serious quarrels. Both of them centred round Mrs. Jiroong; she is Tempa's sister, like him a foreigner to Zongu; she is far more aggressive and has a far more active ego-feeling than the other local-born Lepcha women. The first quarrel was with the wife of the lama

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Datoop whom she accused of seducing her husband; they had two noisy and public quarrels in the guardian's house by the monastery, so that the Mandal was forced to interfere. Mrs. Datoop easily proved her innocence; as a punishment Mrs. Jiroong has been permanently forbidden to enter the monastery compound when feasts are in progress. This effectively cuts her off from the major community relaxations, and incidentally gives her hen-pecked husband, who is a lama and therefore has to be present, an opportunity to escape from her constant scoldings.

627 578

The second quarrel was of a more complicated nature; like the first, it represents an attitude towards sex which is completely alien to the Lepchas of Zongu. The facts are briefly as follows. Jiroong, the youngest son of a very poor family, was married by the Mandal to an old and childless widow (his first wife, since dead) so that he could inherit her property. His eldest brother had a son Tobgé who, on his father's death, gave up his old home, and went with his wife to go and live with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Jiroong never liked Tobgé, whom she considered treated her without sufficient respect; so, to revenge herself, she persuaded Mrs. Tobgé to run away with a young married neighbour named Dadool. To forward the elopement she accompanied Mrs. Tobgé and Dadool on a visit to Mrs. Tobgé's parents who live on the far side of the Teesta beyond Zongu. After they had been absent three days the matter was reported to the *gyapōn*. Before they could take any action however it was learned that Jiroong and Tempa had already gone in pursuit. On their arrival they asked what was the meaning of the escapade, to which the women replied that they had come to see Mrs. Tobgé's family. Tempa and Jiroong were furious at this reply, and, they said subsequently, felt that they could have killed Mrs. Tobgé, whom they considered irresponsible and of a bad character; but the girl had many 'brothers', and they undertook to be responsible for her and to send her home. Dadool returned separately. On their return the Mandal lectured the two young people and told them that they were to live quietly with their own spouses and to behave in future.

Since then Tobgé and Dadool have kept the peace and appear friendly enough; but the enmity between Tobgé and Mrs. Jiroong is stronger than ever, and there is no certainty that the affair will not flair up again. It is known that Dadool and Mrs. Tobgé are still sleeping together for they have been surprised in a field-house, but there is no way of telling if Tobgé himself knows of this.

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627 For a few days Dadool worked for us, fetching fire-wood and water. Jiroong's house is one of the nearest to the monastery.
578 One night, it was believed, Dadool did not return home, and in the morning his wife was not in the home either. Towards midday a a very serious deputation, headed by Mrs. Datoop and Kurma *gyapön* came and asked us to dismiss Dadool; the proximity of Jiroong's house, it was felt, put temptation in his way. The situation was discussed very seriously in low and distressed voices; it was not, as similar circumstances would probably be with us, a rather spicy piece of scandal—for the people involved were in no way directly related—but the threat of impending general unpleasantness. If Mrs. Dadool had gone to complain to her 'brothers' there would be a considerable upset; they would send their *bek-bu* (marriage go-between) to the Mandal, who had been Dadool's *bek-bu*, to say 'You persuaded us to consent to this marriage, and now see what has happened.' If this occurred the Mandal would have to inflict two fines of Rs. 5/– each on Mrs. Tobgé which she would have to pay to Mrs. Dadool, and Dadool would have to pay Rs. 5/– to Tobgé. Fortunately on this occasion their apprehensions were not realised; Dadool turned up in the afternoon with a reasonable account of how he had spent the previous evening; and later in the day his wife returned from Mangan, whither she had gone to buy cigarettes.

The whole situation is a good illustration of Lepcha attitudes. Normally sexual intercourse would not be the subject of serious conversation at all, though it might be joked about; and it seems probable that without Mrs. Jiroong's continual encouragement the affaire would have lapsed long ago, for Dadool appears fond of his wife and contented. But a quarrel or dispute is a menace to everybody's happiness; half the pleasure is lost from a feast if there is a feeling of discomfort in the air. For the Lepchas quarrelling is not natural or inevitable, but a deplorable accident which it is everybody's business to stop.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE RULES OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

i

When a Lepcha speaks of 'we' he generally means all the people of his village. But besides these geographical divisions Lepchas are divided up into other groups by birth and marriage; these groups are the patrilineal clan, or *ptso*, and the immediate and extended family. Unlike their neighbours, the Nepali, the Lepchas have a very small number of kinship terms;[1] fewer even than we have, for they exclude all the category of cousins, and, except for the mother's brothers, make no distinction between the paternal and maternal lines. For people younger than the speaker, too, they do not make any distinction of sex; the same word is used for a younger brother or a younger sister, for a son or a daughter, for a nephew or a niece. Only in the case of children's spouses are different words used for son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Old age is considered by the Lepchas to be a desirable quality; the polite term of address to anybody you are not related to is 'old man'; and there is a tendency to push anybody older than the speaker into a higher generation. Thus, when a man has had a child he calls his wife's parents 'grandfather' and 'grandmother', and the parents call their own elder brothers and sisters 'father' and 'mother'; the wife's elder brother, or her elder sister's husband (and conversely) are equated with her father. The opposite tendency is also manifested towards the wives of younger brothers (the elder brother calls them 'daughters-in-law') and the husbands of younger sisters (the elder sister calls them 'sons-in-law'). In the joint family which dwells under a single roof only nine terms are normally used: 'grandfather', 'grandmother,' 'father',

[1] A complete list of Lepcha kinship terms and other common forms of address are given in Appendix II.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

601 'mother', 'elder brother', 'elder sister', 'younger brother-or-sister,' 'child' and 'grandchild'. It does not matter how many brothers and their wives live together; all the brothers are called 'father', all their wives 'mother' by all the children; if it is necessary to distinguish which 'mother' or 'father' is meant, the child will say 'big mother', 'little mother', and if necessary 'middle mother'; his own mother he will call his 'real mother'. If the married brothers live in different houses the children of the younger brother will still call the elder brother and his wife 'father' and 'mother'; but the sons of the elder brother will call the younger brother 'uncle', and his wife 'potential spouse' (*azong*), for, as will be seen later, they may under certain circumstances inherit her.

The Lepchas count descent nine generations back on the father's side, and at least four on the mother's; a person with whom you share a common ancestor on the paternal side nine generations back is addressed in the same way as your real brothers and sisters, and their parents as though they were the brother and sister-in-law of your father. In theory a person should always be given the correct title reckoning back to this common ancestor, without regard to the relative age of the two people, but when the situation becomes too ridiculous the terms are modified. For example the co-wives of Lumba *chithembu* were 'grandmother' and 'grandchild' (the first wife was the grandchild of a younger brother, the second wife the great-great-grandchild of an elder sister) though there was only nine years difference in their ages; but the younger wife called the elder 'mother', because calling her 'grandmother' made her appear too old. Similarly Tafoor had a half-sister Pankek who was younger than his own children: he therefore told his children to call her by her name until she grew up, as the proper term for an aunt, *a-nyou*, is a very respectful one, and would be brought into ridicule if given to a little girl of six.

551 Except in the case of very young children people are almost always referred to by the proper kinship terms, or by their ecclesiastical or lay titles. Women are practically never named after marriage; they are referred to firstly as their husband's wife, and, as soon as they have borne a child, as their child's mother. Occasionally they are referred to as the inhabitants of the village they were born in. Only occasionally do childless widows start using personal names again. I know the names of very few women in Lingthem, and that is not because of bashfulness on my part or

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on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

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551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law
784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than
[576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger
602 brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *aʔong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

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considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous 601
or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The
boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether 602
he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people
concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, [602]
his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 606
'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between
a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to
his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words
to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in
front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law
copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either
of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law; and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be 593
shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite
sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things 184
that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

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593 184 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing [302 606] the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

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and powerful is the Jamyong *ptso* to which Chala Mandal belongs. Eleven of the thirty-two households belong to this *ptso* representing in all sixty-two individuals, or nearly a third of the population of the village (176); but from this number must be subtracted the twenty-one married women from other *ptso*; I have not reckoned the daughters who have married into other *ptso*. Zumchyung *ptso*, to which Tafoor and his family belong, is the next most populous; it represents five households and thirty-one people, less the ten married women. At the other end of the scale are the Demik and Lubdong Rabji *ptso*, with only a single representative of each—Katel and Pargeut—in the neighbourhood. As far as I can tell from questioning visitors to Lingthem, the situation is similar in the other bigger villages; one or two large and numerous *ptso*, of which the Mandal is nearly always a member, and several other smaller ones.[2]

There is a slight advantage in belonging to a numerous *ptso* because you have more people you can call 'brothers' on whose help you can count automatically; but it is not an overwhelming advantage, on account of the Lepcha habits of co-operation, and some of the richest and most successful people of Lingthem were members of small *ptso*. In the choice of a son- or daughter-in-law the size of the *ptso* is sometimes taken into consideration; it is better for a child-in-law to come from a numerous *ptso*, for then there will be greater possibility of obtaining a second spouse, in the event of the first one's sterility or death. A stranger such as Tempa who marries into a populous *ptso* (his wife's father was Jamyong *ptso*) has the same advantages as if he were himself a member of it and his wife's relations behave to him exactly as if they were his own.

Each *ptso* is under the guardianship of certain supernaturals, who are worshipped by all the male members of the *ptso*; every third year all the men of one locality gather together and make a sacrifice of an ox and certain jewels and valuables (these latter are only symbolically offered and are subsequently retaken into use) followed by a feast; these feasts are held in rotation in the houses of the members of the *ptso* who live in the neighbourhood. This sacrifice is entirely under the direction of the Mun, with no admixture of lamaism at all, and a few of the more pious lamas refuse to participate in them, claiming that the lamas have in Chukyoong *rum* a 'guild' supernatural more powerful and more worthy of worship than the

[2] The distribution of *ptso* in Lingthem is tabulated in Appendix I, b.

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614 gods of the *ptso*; but the greater number of lamas feel no meta-
776 physical qualms and bear their full share in this Mun ceremony. The *ptso* supernaturals are always invoked by the Mun when they perform a ceremony for the benefit of a particular individual. In the Mun theogony all the *ptso* supernaturals are friendly and there is no rivalry between the groups; it is thought that the more populous the *ptso* the stronger the guardian supernaturals.

The *ptso* supernaturals descend, as it were, from father to son; women have other different supernaturals which descend from mother to daughter; with the consequence that brothers and sisters have different guardian supernaturals, although all children are counted as members of their father's *ptso*. (An exception must be [848] made in the case of unacknowledged bastards, who are considered to be members of the *ptso* of their mother's father.) These women's supernaturals are invoked, along with numberless others, at the Mun ceremonies after sowing and harvesting, and special sacrifices are made in their intention in the case of illness. Special sacrifices are also made to them at the time of the marriage feast, and the questioning of the bride about her special supernaturals is one of the most formalised incidents in the marriage ceremonies.
776 There are certain other supernaturals which are common to all women; these include Ami *rum*, the god of riches, and Katong Fi who visits women in their dreams and copulates with them at the time of their menses; this dream-copulation is meant to continue throughout life, and should a month pass without this dream it means that the woman is shortly going to die. Parallel to these exclusively female supernaturals are Pong *rum*, and his wife Shing *rum*, the patrons of hunting, who are worshipped exclusively by men. There are also other supernaturals who are as it were patrons of each sex respectively, and yet others who belong to the family, as distinct from the *ptso*. Among the countless supernaturals with which the world is filled these personal and private ones have no great significance; along with numberless others—the enumeration of gods in a Mun sacrifice may take two or three hours—they are prayed to for the blessings of long life, many children, and prosperity, but their power is not considered to be great.

614 Except as an exogamic classification the *ptso* is now functionless. Although members of the different *ptso* are scattered, not only throughout Zongu, but wherever Lepchas live, the triennial unions only gather those members who live near one another; to the best of my knowledge there has never been, nor has there ever

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been a reason for, a general gathering of all the members of the *ptso*. A traveller among strange people has no claim on the hospitality of unknown members of his *ptso*, though it would still be shameful for two members of the same *ptso* to have sexual connection. More than anything else, the *ptso* is a device for the prevention of incest. 614

iii

Incest for the Lepchas is horrifying; they do not call it a sin but *nam-toak*, an act which produces a year of disaster for the community. Sin is a lamaist conception and is on the whole only applied to acts like the killing of animals; *nam-toak* is the phrase used for personal acts which are felt to be strongly anti-social. Any sexual connection with blood relations for nine generations on the father's side and four on the mother's is considered incestuous; but children under the age of puberty, or, as the Lepchas say ' who are not old enough to know shame ', are not considered capable of committing incest and no watch is kept on children's play. Besides blood relations sexual connection with the following relations-by-marriage is considered as incestuous: for a man to sleep with any of the women he calls ' mother-in-law ' or ' daughter-in-law ' (that is his wife's mother, his wife's elder sister, the wife of his wife's elder brother, and his sons' wives, the wives of his *younger* brothers, and the wives of his brothers' and sisters' sons); for a woman, to sleep with any of the men she calls ' father-in-law ' or ' son-in-law ' (that is her husband's father, her husband's *elder* brothers, the husband of her husband's elder sister, and her daughter's husbands, the husbands of her younger sisters, and the husbands of her brothers' and sisters' daughters). Such relationships, besides causing a year of disaster to the community, would call down a devil on to the guilty couple who would cover them with sores. Should children result from such a union they would be allowed to live, but they would either be of an evil mind or idiots, and would be short-lived. 835

No cases of mother-son or father-daughter incest are known of; nor does the situation occur in any mythological story. Brother-sister incest on the other hand is a motive in a great deal of Mun mythology, inevitably so, for the world and all that therein is are the children of Itpomu the Creative Mother. The origin of devils and noxious animals arises from the incest of her first two ' human ' children (if I can so express it) Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*. I only heard of one case of true brother-sister incest, and that 835 773 835

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835 occurred in another village some generations ago. There are however two contemporary incestuous couples from Zongu whom the Lepchas classify as 'brother' and 'sister'; in both cases they were two generations removed from a common ancestor, or in our classification second cousins. These couples were shunned as irremediably unclean and contagious; they were exiled from their villages and neighbourhood; neither neighbour nor relative would visit them nor help them; when they die nobody would see to the disposal of their body, nor conduct their soul to paradise. One of the couples died after their guilty association had lasted ten years; the other couple, who came from the village of Parfok eleven years ago, are still living at a village three days' walk from Zongu; people from Zongu have seen them on their travels and recently one or two have spoken to them; so far no Lepcha has entered their house nor taken food from them.

It is considered very wicked, though the act will only affect the actual performers, for a man and his son to sleep with the same woman, or a mother and her daughter with the same man; if this is done the line will die out. This situation does however occur occasionally; there is a recent case from Pantong of a man living with mother and daughter; the trio died after three years. Another recent instance occurred at Liklyang on the other side of the river, where a woman was living with her married daughter and son-in-law; a stranger came and married the mother and subsequently slept with the daughter. Although such behaviour is very disgraceful instances of it are recounted with considerable relish, and not with the shocked embarrassment with which stories of true incest are recounted; it is a bad thing to do, but there is something rather attractive and dare-devil about it. The man who told with enormous gusto the story of one man living with mother and daughter seemed shocked and disgusted when recounting the incident of Takal's wife sleeping with Satéo and his father. The emotion which these stories of one man possessing both mother and daughter evoke seems to me to indicate that the rivalry between father and son, or father and son-in-law, so successfully muted by the Lepchas' cultural arrangements, is not entirely suppressed, and finds some gratification in dwelling on these wicked people who have displaced a potential rival.[8]

[8] It should be noted that in both these cases the man first married the mother and then afterwards slept with the step-daughter. Had he acted in the reverse order—marrying the daughter and then sleeping with her mother—the situation would have counted as fully incestuous.

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A child should know who are his *num-neu-ʔong*, that is those 835
people with whom all sexual contact is prohibited, by the time he is nine or ten. By the time he is twelve or thirteen a boy should also know those women whom he is permitted to sleep with—usually a very much smaller number than those who are forbidden. In the case of those relations of a generation above his own—that is to say, the wives of his father's 'elder brothers', he also has to know which of these women his father has slept with beforehand, for in that case the potential partner becomes permanently forbidden. Thus for example, Chimpet can never sleep with nor inherit his 'aunt' Mrs. Datoop (Tafoor calls Datoop 'elder brother' although they are actually three generations away from a common ancestor) because several years ago his father slept with her. Since sexual relationships outside the prohibited degrees are not considered embarrassing or important, no unpleasant or guilt-ridden situation arises through the father having to inform his son about his earlier sexual life. Such subjects are rather a matter for joking, but it would be a disaster if, through ignorance, the son cut short the family line.

iv.

Owing to the wide application of the incest ban it often happens 582
that a boy or girl has not a single potential spouse or unmarried love-partner in the same village; and consequently in the far greater number of cases a boy's wife has to be sought from a distant village, and a girl has to leave her home far behind when she goes to her husband. Of the sixty married women in Lingthem all but thirteen were from outside; and of these thirteen four had married newcomers to the village.[4] The remaining nine were either representatives of small *ptso*, or else their husbands were.

Lepchas make their first marriage extremely young. In Lingthem there was only one girl over fourteen unbetrothed, and that was Prumtu, who had a bad squint, was reputed to be lazy, and had a rough and unpleasing character. Eight boys over sixteen [732]
were unbetrothed; they were the two carpenters,[5] three mental defectives who will never be married, and three orphans. These orphans were Satéo, who was very badly lame and without property

[4] For a full list of married women and their place of origin see Appendix I, 2, Table II.

[5] See Chapter Four, p. 121.

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582 whom the Mandal was looking after, Takshyom, Kurma's nineteen-year-old nephew, and Kanchok, the seventeen-year-old adopted son of Chelim. Of these three it is possible that Satéo will never be married; if he were hale and able to do his work properly his poverty would not stand in his way; but nobody would want to give their daughter to a poor cripple. In Lingthem there is no suitable unrelated girl; if there were one the Mandal would probably arrange the match. The other two wards are expected to be betrothed shortly, as soon as a suitable partner with a fitting horoscope can be found. Mental defectives are never married, and people with incapacitating physical defects practically never.

583 There are two stages in Lepcha marriage: *aséк*, or betrothal, and *bri* or bringing home the bride. *Aséк* is actually the validating ceremony at which the formal gifts from the family of the groom to that of the bride are presented; these gifts are called 'the price of the bride' and once they are accepted the groom has full access to his bride and all children born after *aséк* are considered as legitimate. But until the large and expensive marriage feast or *bri* has been performed, the wife and, possibly, her children, stay at her father's house save possibly for short visits; and during this period the son-in-law is, as it were, his father-in-law's servant, and has to go and work for him whenever he is summoned and cannot leave without obtaining his permission; he is in a subordinate position, and, though he may be taunted, must never answer back.

584 Marriages are always arranged through the offices of two *bek-bu*, or between-men, one representing each party. In theory any old and experienced man who knows how to make the formal and flowery speeches in *tang-bor* or allusive periphrases[6] can fill this rôle and in other villages there are a number of *bek-bu*; but in Lingthem in the last twenty years in all but two of the sixty marriages which have taken place the Mandal has filled this rôle. In theory the biological parents should have nothing at all to do with their children's marriages; were they to do so either the children would die young or the marriage would break up. All the negotiations concerning a marriage are carried on by the paternal or maternal uncles of the children, preferably a paternal-uncle-older-than-father, or people standing in this relation; but in point of fact the parents are always surreptitiously, and sometimes fairly openly consulted. The demand for marriage is always made in

[6] For further explanations of *tang-bor* and examples see Chapter Ten, p. 265.

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the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'. 584

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7] 582 584

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made. 584 [587]

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in 582 582 431

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

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582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

583 There is one other potential arrangement by which men without
597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

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586 property, animals and children. If there is only one daughter the parents will divide her marriage price; she can live with either. If there is only one son the spouse keeping him must pay to the other Rs. 40, a cow and a pig and if the father keeps him a length of cloth to the wife, if the wife keeps him a copper vessel[9] to the husband. The last formal divorce in Lingthem was that of the first Dorjé Lapoon from his third and fourth wives (see Chapter Sixteen); a distant 'aunt' of the Mandal's was also divorced in this way in Sakhyong but there were no children.

If a woman runs away the husband's relatives will come for her and ask for her back or else claim the marriage price; but if the wife is unsatisfactory the husband will merely claim and get compensation in the form of the head and two legs of an ox and a scarf and rupee. Should such a girl re-marry a representative of the husband goes to the marriage; if the representative is the maternal uncle he is given Rs. 3 and half a leg of an ox; if the paternal uncle, Rs. 5 and the rump. By a recent decision of the twelve Mandals of Zongu in council it has been decided that these small recompenses shall be generally accepted for a runaway wife, instead of the large sums demanded earlier.

In the event of a woman showing a marked and continued preference for some man not her husband, the husband will almost always let her go to the lover. If the man cannot be classified as a 'younger brother' he must pay to the injured husband all the marriage expenses which he himself had paid earlier; or alternatively the girl's family will provide another girl as a substitute without further payment, but in that case the payments which the husband would have recovered from the lover will go to the girl's parents. If the lover is classifiable as a 'younger brother' the wife will probably be given to him for a small symbolical payment without any formalities; but it is understood that the younger brother will give special help if the elder brother remarries. Adultery, without really marked preference, is not a reason for divorce; and no anxiety is felt or expressed about the paternity of a man's children.

vi

581 In Lepcha theory marriage is not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups; and they have

[436] [9] A copper pot is the most conspicuous Lepcha valuable: it is used in a great number of sociological transactions.

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a set of rules by which the union can be continued despite the death of one of the partners. These rules are not uncommon in non-European societies and have been given the technical terms of levirate, by which a man marries his deceased elder brother's wife, and sororate, by which a woman marries her deceased elder sister's husband. The Lepchas employ both of these devices, but their application is very different, and the levirate claims are much more strongly pressed. 581

In Lepcha theory the husband's group purchases the wife, as is explicitly recognised in the term 'price of the bride', *nyom-sa afaar*, which is used for the *asék* presents; therefore if the husband dies the wife is still the property of his group, and can be married to another member of the same group without further reference to her parents, though on such occasions the wife's parents are actually given small courtesy presents. In theory too the wife has no right to refuse the man offered in the place of her dead husband, or, if she feels an unconquerable repulsion, her group should supply a second woman to replace her. Similarly if the husband wishes to refuse the wife he has inherited he should supply another man in place of himself. In practice these regulations are not always carried out, and relatively seldom if the woman is childless; if the heritable spouse really dislikes her inheritor no compulsion is used to force her to marry him, nor are there any sanctions for this; three women formerly married to inhabitants of Lingthem have in recent years returned to their own homes on the death of their husbands because they did not like their inheritors, or because their inheritors did not like them. In such cases, if the women remarry, the marriage payments are made, not to their family group, but to the family groups of their dead husbands. 587

The sororate claims are enforced rather differently. On the forty-ninth day after the death of his wife the widower must visit his parents-in-law, taking with him as presents a load of *chi* and a pig; on the receipt of which the parents-in-law consult with all their male relatives and offer him as wife another girl, preferably a real or classificatory younger sister of the first wife. If the man does not wish to accept the offered girl (and if there is nobody else suitable sometimes babies are offered) on the following day he must present his wife's parents with an ox, or, failing that, a pig, a load of *chi*, a big basket of rice and Rs. 5, and ask their permission to refuse the girl and to marry, if he feels so inclined,

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587 into another *ptso*. After the presents this permission is always given automatically.

If the man accepts the girl offered the *asék* is performed one year after the death of the first wife, and the marriage usually shortly after. For second marriages the ceremonies are similar to first marriages but on a rather smaller scale; both the presents and the feasts are only about two-thirds as expensive as for first marriages. When widows remarry the ceremony is slightly altered, and the bride enters her husband's house on the first, instead of the second, day of the marriage feast. Except for sororate spouses it is considered rather difficult for a widower to get an unmarried girl for his second wife, especially if his first wife died young, for this is believed to be a sign that he is unlucky; consequently it is fairly usual for widowers to marry widows. The situation is naturally altered if a widower makes an unmarried woman pregnant.

837 587 Among the Lepchas a man can inherit the wives of all his *elder* brothers, real or classificatory, the wives of all his paternal and maternal uncles real or classificatory, provided these 'uncles' are younger than his parents but not younger than himself, and all the *younger* sisters of his wife, real or classificatory. Conversely a woman can be inherited by all her husband's younger brothers, all the sons of her husband's uncles, and all the husbands of her elder sisters, real or classificatory. With all these potentially hereditable spouses the Lepcha has the right to copulate during the lifetime of their husbands (or wives) and in nearly all cases these rights are taken full advantage of, as opportunity offers; opportunity is naturally greater with people who live in the same district, and distance often prevents men taking advantage of the right to sleep with the younger sisters of their wife, and women with the husbands of their older sisters, since they most often live in different parts of the country.

837 With the wives of their real elder brothers Lepchas have in theory a right to use force, if they will not copulate willingly; the younger brothers are considered to have contributed to the marriage price of the bride and therefore to have, as it were, a legal right. In point of fact such a use of force never arises; Lepcha women know that their husbands' younger brothers have the right of access; and casual sexual relationships are so unimportant emotionally for Lepchas that few women would think it worth while making a fuss. If the women have a real repulsion for their husband's younger brothers nothing can be done about it, for,

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CHÉLÉ, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY HIS AUNT

PAŤEK, THE HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD OF SIX AT 17. WITH HIM PONGRING, THE MONASTERY GUARDIAN

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837 as several Lepchas said when the point was raised 'Who can force a grown woman against her will?' More distantly related women, such as 'aunts', may put up a certain amount of semi-playful resistance, but no rancour is felt if it is overborne.

It is considered to be an act of excessively bad taste to copulate with a heritable wife in her husband's presence, or in such situations that there is a possibility of his witnessing it. These legalised adulteries usually take place during the husband's temporary absence, or else outside the house, in the forests or fields or field-houses; these outdoor encounters are usually very brief, and have a slightly romantic flavour. Copulation inside the house has the advantage of giving longer time, but it also exposes the couple to questionable remarks and a good deal of teasing.

836 One of the results of this situation is that almost all boys and young men get their first real sexual experience and training from 864 an older married woman. Elder brothers usually explicitly instruct their younger brothers in their rights. In Lepcha theory a woman should never make direct sexual advances—the common Lepcha words for sexual activity are, like the English ones, transitive and one-directioned—but in point of fact I found that in nearly every case men had had their first real sexual experience with the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle' at the woman's direct invitation and solicitation. This is considered altogether desirable; although sexual activity is thought to be as natural and as necessary as eating, it is necessary that boys should be taught to do it properly. Thus Chndo said one day 'If I caught Chimpet (the son of his elder brother Tafoor) sleeping with my wife I shouldn't be cross at all; on the contrary I should be very pleased, for she would be teaching him how to do it properly and I would know that he was in the hands of a good teacher! On the other hand, if I caught a married man, who had a right to sleep with my wife, doing so I should reproach them for their lack of shame in doing in my presence what might better be done in my absence; if I was really angry I should tell other people about it, so that everybody might know how shameless the man had been.'

614 I have already suggested that the *ptso* was possibly earlier a geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible 835 that these permissive regulations were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the *ptso* as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such

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614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced
835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is
[538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem-
[195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual
[831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand
[832] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-
831 charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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582 will also be his wife's elder sister and equated with his mother-in-
835 law; similarly the elder brother will not have access to or be able to marry his wife's younger sister, because she is equated with his daughter-in-law. If there was an interval between the first and second marriages both parties would have the right of access until the second *aséк*; to avoid such complication it is desirable that the marriages of pairs of brothers and sisters take place as nearly simultaneously as is possible.

The semi-diagrammatic complementary relations which are set up when two brothers marry and have sons are worth tabulating. The elder brother has to respect his younger brother's wife as his 'daughter-in-law', but his son need not as he can sleep with and inherit her; the younger brother need not respect his elder brother's wife as he can sleep with and inherit her, but his son must respect her as his 'big mother'.

587 In the event of a widow being left with young children it is essential that a husband be supplied from her husband's group, and this is usually done without any sort of friction. Thus Chano, himself a childless widower, recently inherited the wife and three young children of his dead elder brother. This is the one situation in which the provision of a levirate spouse is imperative; if the widow is sterile or the children all grown up and married there is no compulsion and such women often return to their own home. Not always however; at the age of 68 the second Dorjé Lapoon married *en secondes noces* his widowed 'aunt' (actually the wife of his grandmother's brother's son) Pumri, who was then aged 73. The two had however carried on a fairly constant concubinage in the last forty years of Pumri's husband's lifetime.

The chief disadvantage of the sororate and levirate claims is that it quite occasionally happens that there is considerable disparity between the ages of the spouses, and in particular that the woman will be considerably older than the man. A relatively poor family is liable to hand on a satisfactory woman even to a boy of nine or ten; the converse seldom occurs as a man will not accept a very young girl as a second wife. During my stay in Lingthem such a case was causing considerable dispute. Kahlyeu's grandson, Chélé, at the age of ten had inherited the wife of a dead younger uncle. This girl had only been married a year before the death of her husband, and was at the time only fifteen, but the psychological difference in their ages was far greater than the real difference. Chélé was a very bright and intelligent little boy, but

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nervous and physically thin and rather undersized. He was remarkable for having an almost complete memory of all that had happened to him after the age of eighteen months. Unlike the vast majority of Lepcha children he showed a marked disinclination to grow up, and appeared happiest playing in the company of children younger than himself. His mother died about three years ago, and when he was about six his father committed suicide by eating arrow poison and attempted drowning, after he had been publicly reprimanded by his wife's family for neglecting her while she was ill. After the death of his parents Chélé lived alone with his grandfather and a middle-aged distantly related 'aunt'.

As opposed to Chélé's psychological backwardness his wife, a younger sister of the Mandal's first wife, was somewhat advanced for her age and appeared a fully-developed self-possessed young woman. After the death of her first husband she had gone home to her family for a year, but in May 1937 she returned to take up life with her husband, staying for the time being with her elder sister. Chélé did not want to get married at all, and would run away from his wife whenever he saw her. Old Kahlyeu used to run after him and gave him extremely severe beatings to bring him to his senses; but Chélé was obstinate, and when he was scolded, used to threaten to drown himself in the river. A few children occasionally make such suicide threats when they are publicly reproached or consider themselves ill-used (most of the children I know of who make or have made such threats have exceptional early histories, usually orphans or adopted children) but these threats are never taken seriously and there is no instance of a child putting such threats into action. But with Chélé people are a trifle anxious; he is an abnormal child, with his exceptional intelligence and babyish behaviour.

The situation did not advance in any way while I was observing it. Chélé continued obstinate; his wife seemed fairly placid and non-attached about the whole affair, but even presuming the two do live together the situation is naturally somewhat unstable. A few years ago Takneum *youmi*'s son Itup inherited a wife under rather similar circumstances; when he was twelve his wife became pregnant with an obvious bastard. This wife died young and Itup married again; the bastard, Seryop Katoo, was brought up as a younger brother of Itup. It also occasionally happens, as in the case of Kurma's stepfather, that a man is childless because he has inherited a wife near the menopause.

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587 If, after a number of years of marriage, a man's wife is sterile,
595 he has a right to apply to his wife's family for a second wife, providing his first wife agrees. The formalities entailed in this request are the same as those which have to be performed after the death of a first wife;[22] an extra preliminary present has to be given, but the subsequent expenses for the marriage are slightly less. In theory it is only permissible to take a second wife from the first wife's *ptso*, and ideally this second wife should be the first wife's real or classificatory younger sister. This is recognised in the terms with
[601] which co-wives are always referred to; the Nepali words *jethi* and *kanchi*, meaning 'eldest sister' and 'youngest sister' are always used; Lepcha has no equivalent terms to indicate the position of a child in the order of birth. In the great majority of cases the ideal conditions are observed, and the two wives, if not actual sisters, are of the same *ptso* and use kinship terms. In cultural theory the co-wives have already an established habit of cooperation and cohabitation which only needs to be renewed, and the situation of co-wife is meant to be an agreeable one. This expectation is not always justified; occasionally co-wives quarrel; but the majority are glad for the companionship of a close relative, and the lessened work which their presence means. The husband is meant to spend alternate nights with each of them.

595 In Lingthem there are seven men with two wives each; but only in three cases was the second wife taken because the first wife was sterile. In two of the cases the second wife is indeed only a co-wife by courtesy; Asang gave a home to the middle-aged widow of his elder brother, because she had nowhere else to go; and for the same reason Gongyop took in his wife's sister. In this second case the hospitality was not long accepted; though nearly sixty years old, this woman, Samblyou, with her elder sister Mrs. Takal, is the most promiscuous woman in the village, and after distributing her favours in nearly every direction, including the seduction of a number of the younger boys, she is now cohabiting with Zumba, a widower twelve years younger than herself.

Chala Mandal has had in all four wives in two pairs; the first wife he gave to a 'younger brother', who lived with him; after her death he also gave him her equally sterile sister; this second wife returned to her family after the death of the

[22] See p. 159.

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'younger brother'. Chala Mandal then married two more wives, 595
'sisters', and nieces of the first two wives; the last wife of all was the widow of Katel's dead son to whom she had already borne two daughters who stayed with their grandfather; after her marriage to the Mandal she bore two more daughters, one of whom still survives.

Thyak Thimbu has also had four wives in two pairs. The first two died childless; the second two, though not related to the first wives, are themselves aunt and niece. Almost after hope of Thyak Thimbu—he is Gongyop's elder brother—producing a child had been abandoned his youngest wife bore a son in May 1937. Lumba *chithembu* has also had two wives, 'grandmother' and 'grand-daughter'; the second wife has borne him three children. Lumba *jethi* is a rather independent old body; though she gets on well enough with her co-wife she dislikes what she calls 'living in a crowd' and consequently has made a permanent home for herself in a field-house, which she shares with her younger stepson; it is a rule that, if for any reason co-wives separate, the children shall be equally divided. The two wives cooperate in all the field-work. Lumba is meant to divide his time equally between the two of them, but well-authenticated rumour says that he spends much more time with *jethi*; she is a jolly and extremely bawdy old party. She is a Mun and is nearly always the singer on those occasions when singing is ceremonially called for.

By his first wife Katel had one son and three daughters; but the daughters married away, and the son, a thief and a ne'er-do-well, died a violent death in foreign parts. Therefore ostensibly in the hope of begetting another son Katel married a second wife, of a different *ptso* to his first one (who is still living) a woman twenty-seven years younger than himself; she is only eighteen now. Very exceptionally for a Lepcha, he is deeply in love with this young wife of his; she on the other hand cannot stick Katel, and the marriage is extremely stormy, with threats of and occasional attempts at suicide on both sides. For a number of years this young wife refused to go to live with Katel; finally two years ago the Mandal threatened her parents that if they permitted their daughter to live with or return to them, they must refund the marriage price. So for two years she has been living with Katel, but she still refuses to sleep with him, despite the jewels and presents with which he has smothered her; it is rumoured that she finds pleasanter bed-fellows elsewhere. Katel though rich and fairly

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595 industrious, is so stupid as to be almost defective, and has a very unpleasant look of low cunning. He is one of the most unpopular people in the village: I personally found him quite repulsive.

Finally there is the case of Aga, the son of Hlatam the 'poisoner', which represents one of the most disruptive situations possible in Lepcha life. Aga has been married a number of years; his wife has borne him three children, and was in the spring of 1937 pregnant with a fourth. During the greater part of his married life Aga slept, quite legitimately, with the sterile wife of one of his paternal uncles. When this uncle died in 1935 the aunt returned home to her blood-relations in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum, as there was no suitable man in her husband's family to inherit her. At the end of the year of mourning she was *asék*'d by Zumba of Lingthem; but six months after this *asék* she came and settled permanently in Aga's house, with whom she had continued her intercourse uninterruptedly. Aga's first wife was naturally very angry and reproachful, as there is no possible excuse for bringing home a second wife when the first wife is fertile; and, as marriage is the concern of the whole group, all her family are angry with Aga and his aunt. This aunt has been argued with for days on end; people have pointed out to her how desirable Zumba, with his fine house and many fields, is as a husband; but she remains obdurate and refuses to go and live with him. The situation is naturally extremely unpleasant and disturbing, and is under constant discussion by the Mandals of Lingthem and Lungdeum. There is a constant fear that the first wife's family will come and demand elaborate reparation from Aga, or alternatively that she may return home with her children to them. This behaviour is loudly condemned by the other Lepchas; it is chiefly for this that Aga is called 'evil-minded'.

Some years ago there was another similar but more pathetic situation. After the Muktair was married and his wife, Tafoor-mu, had borne him two children, he went to Gangtok for five years to study in one of the big monasteries. During this long absence he fell in love with another girl, and on his return he asked Tafoor-mu to let him bring a second wife home. She at first naturally objected; she had borne him two sons; what was the justification for bringing home a second wife? But the Muktair promised that he would love both wives equally, and she finally allowed herself to be persuaded; the Muktair then *asék*'d the girl from Gangtok and brought her home two years later: their only child, a daughter, was born in this interval. When she came home this second wife

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proved to be jealous and possessive, and refused to allow her husband to sleep with Tafoor-mu. 595

Dunbi was the 'younger brother' (actually the son of a younger paternal uncle) of the Muktair; at the period when the second wife was brought home he was completely alone, for his parents, wife, and children had all died in a dysentery epidemic. The Muktair took him into his house, and there he so well consoled Tafoor-mu that she became pregnant. The Muktair thereupon offered her to Dunbi; he *asék*'d her with the symbolical gift of one pig, and the families separated. One year later the second wife died.

The position of Tafoor-mu is one of the saddest in Lingthem; formerly the wife of the most prosperous man in the neighbourhood, and with two prosperous sons, she is now married to the poorest and most feckless man in the village. She has borne him three daughters; the eldest is married away, the second lives with her half-brother, Tafoor—she is unbetrothed Prumtu, the girl with the squint—and the youngest is a child of six. Although Tafoor and Chudo give her occasional presents she lives and dresses poorly, and has to work hard to compensate for her husband's sloth. As far as I could observe, Tafoor and Chudo feel little love or respect for their unfortunate mother.

We in Europe make passionate and personal love one of the chief pivots round which our society moves; the Lepchas of Zongu have completely excluded it, and it is liable to be extremely disruptive when it does flare up. The normal emotional situation is one of reasonable affection founded on mutual rights and benefits; people love one another for statable and stated reasons. No love is considered automatic; it is not considered inevitable that parents should love their children nor brothers their brothers and sisters; it is merely considered probable, because their situations entail the mutual obligations on which love is supposed to rest. Unless people are strongly deviant Lepchas are chary of pronouncing judgement on their neighbours' characters; most people, they say, are much of a muchness. Consequently it is to be expected that arranged marriages will turn out well, unless one of the partners has a really bad character; since love is founded on mutual obligations and benefits, these mutual obligations can be set up between any two people. It is worth noting that all three men whose love stories are recounted above fall well outside the Lepcha norm. The Muktair was, it would appear, an exceptionally strong-willed and ambitious man, and his love affair started when he was living 152 581

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152 in foreign surroundings; also his second wife came from a mixed
581 community. Katel and Aga on the other hand are both subnormal; they are foolish, suspicious and disliked.

152 For the Lepchas of Zongu sexual activity is practically divorced from emotion; it is a pleasant and amusing experience, and as
831 much a necessity as food and drink; and like food and drink it does not matter from whom you receive it, as long as you get it; though you are naturally grateful to the people who provide you with either regularly. One of the most difficult of all concepts for the European to take into consideration is the non-European attitude to sexual activity; with us, explicitly on the part of men, sexual desirability is most intimately bound up with aesthetic considerations. Although there may be individual disagreement as to who are included in the terms, potential sexual partners are divided into the categories of 'attractive' and 'unattractive'; and we believe that only perverts or prostitutes will have anything to do with the second category. Primitive people, I believe, do not make this distinction; there is social kudos to be acquired from being the known possessor of a beautiful wife or mistress; but for temporary sexual gratification any willing partner is equally acceptable. I found it extremely difficult to accept the notion that most of the men with young and pretty wives at one time or another slept with the two sixty-year-old haridans who were the promiscuous women of Lingthem; but as far as I can make out their invitations were never refused.[12] Fourteen-year-old Chimpet gave a good illus-

[12] Professor Malinowski records a similar situation in the Trobriands in *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge: London, 1929) page 247–8: 'The (medical officer) was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with a very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhea, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman, so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. . . .' 'I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic but regular intercourse.' Professor Malinowski finds this notion so repulsive that he accounts for it 'by their manner of carrying out this physiological activity', which in the Trobriands may entail very slight physical contact. This explanation does not however hold good for the Lepchas; see Chapter Twelve, p. 330. I think primitives dissociate, in a way we cannot, the public attitudes of parading a desirable partner, and the private ones of physiological gratification. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in the Somerset village where I live potentially jealous situations arise in the case of people whom I personally would consider, either through age or ugliness, to be almost sexless.

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tration of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had twice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accompanied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he enjoyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. 152 831

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with his field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because he has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbourhood, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him and to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted without any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free in the choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make the request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly as if he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events. The co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights, but all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, and he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception is only made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence makes his paternity a physiological impossibility. 575 [843]

In the recent past there have only been two cases of such polyandry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above, who first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger brother'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who shared his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a lama attached to another village who was almost always away, so that the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his shared wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a wife, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless the two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as it is liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advantages for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an easy way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an extra adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife when you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband on the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor and unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that there are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of polyandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with your husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are obviously suspended. [835]

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848 It occasionally happens that a woman becomes pregnant before she is *asék*'d, or when either the youth or the absence of her husband renders legitimate paternity impossible. These accidents are considered deplorable, but the effect is very different according to whether the woman is married or not; if she is married the bastardy is a private affair; if she is not it threatens the whole community with a storm of hail which will destroy the harvest. The danger of these illegitimate pregnancies apparently only arise in the later stages;[14] grown men, especially widowers, often impregnate their future wives and only perform *asék* in the third month of pregnancy (under these circumstances parents will usually give their daughters to widowers) and they do not have to perform the ceremony of *thip-song* which is required for bastards. It also happens very occasionally that a boy and girl will present their elders with a *fait accompli* through the girl's pregnancy; this also does not involve the ceremony.

The *thip-song* ceremony which has to be performed for illegally pregnant women is costly and elaborate. An ox, or, failing that, two pigs have to be sacrificed by a Mun, and a long and involved ceremony performed by the lamas. This ceremony should properly last two days, and all the village should be feasted, to recompense them for their harvest which the hail would spoil. If the father of the child is unmarried, and wishes to marry the girl, he pays for this ceremony, after which the *asék* is performed in the normal manner. If for any reason he cannot or will not marry the girl his group should offer a substitute husband. Should the father be a married man this paternity is a cause of considerable scandal; all his family group, as well as his wife's, will turn against him and upbraid him publicly; they may even shame him by paying for the *thip-song* ceremony to be performed. It is possible however that his first wife may be agreeable to his *asék*-ing the girl and taking her as his second wife.

If a man acknowledges his paternity but refuses to marry the girl or provide an alternative husband for her the girl's family will pay for the *thip-song* ceremony, in which case the father will have no claim on the child; he will be obliged however to present the

[14] There is, as far as I know, no formulated rule on the subject; but it seems probable that, on the analogy of the pre-natal precautions which only have to be observed in the second five moons of pregnancy, it is only when the bastard is fully formed, at the end of five moons, that it becomes socially dangerous.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth. 848

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu. 847 848 [842]

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15] 848 [753] 848 777

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
[853] bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's
subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown
842 herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

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the ages of fifty and thirty; the remaining seven are between twenty and thirty and for them there is still some chance of producing a child, for though copulation normally starts at or before puberty the average age for bearing the first child (worked out from the women of Lingthem) is over twenty-two; there are only three instances of a woman bearing a child before she was twenty. Most exceptionally for a primitive community it was possible in Zongu to get the exact age of every individual for the following reason. It is absolutely essential for participation in all lamaist ceremonies for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year 'animal' cycle[17] they were born, for this affects birth and marriage, the diagnosis of disease, the suitability or otherwise of individual exorcists, and many other occasions in ordinary life. Also after he has completed his third (or exceptionally his fourth) cycle—that is to say when he is 36 or 48—it is obligatory for a Lepcha to make prophetic consultation as to the hazards and misfortunes which await him in the next twelve years. Although no Lepcha can state his age in years, everybody knows their 'animal' year, and with few exceptions, which can be checked by cross-reference, the number of cycles they have completed.

I have not been able to make up my mind as to the reason for the great sterility of the Lepchas. It would seem as though it were the women rather than the men who were sterile, for in the greater number of cases of a man remarrying on account of his first wife's sterility the second wife has borne him children. A suggestion put forward by some Lepchas with whom I discussed the matter, though others considered it absolutely ludicrous, is that sterility may be due to premature copulation. The Lepchas do not recognise and have no word for physical puberty, and most of them believe that the signs of female puberty (swelling of the breasts and beginning of menses) are the result of copulation and that therefore girls have to be copulated with in order that they may develop. A number of people admitted (if they were women) copulating with men when they were only ten or eleven, or (if they were men) more or less raping young girls. A number of the sterile women however emphatically deny such premature experience, and I have no reason to suppose they were lying; and anyhow on the medical evidence it seems doubtful whether such premature experience would cause subsequent sterility, though it might render childbirth more difficult.

[17] This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; see also Appendix III.

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164 Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas 842 call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained 731 dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

842 Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

163 Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-165 seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that

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my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

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Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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597 presents are called ' the price of milk '. For the child of a stranger besides these presents must be given a big pig, a load of *chi* and two big baskets of rice and pop-corn; the giving of these presents is equated with the giving of betrothal presents and both are called by the same word, *asék*: in the adopting *asék* however no *bek-bu* is required; the adopting father takes the presents himself and brings the child away with him. In the case of a destitute orphan no ceremonial presents are given; the child is merely fed and housed in exchange for his labour; if there are no other direct heirs and if the child does not quarrel with his adopting parents he will normally inherit the property. Formally adopted children are treated in every way as the real heirs of their parents. It is permissible to adopt a child at any age between weaning and marriage; the most usual age is between three and seven.

Two reasons are given for adopting a child: to have the benefit of the child's labour, and to have an heir and a support in old age. The first reason is much stressed; almost as soon as children acquire physical independence they do a number of chores about the house, which increase with their age and strength; for example, fetching wood and water and helping their elders by fetching tools and preparing simple implements for work. On the whole people only adopt children after many years of marriage.

The health of the child is the only consideration when adoption is considered; up till marriage good or bad looks are not regarded. The child will be allowed to return to its real parents from time to time; if the adopting parents and the adopted child get on really badly the child may be returned with a present of a big copper pot; but if the child runs away because it is unhappy it will be sent back by its parents. There is no supposed emotional relationship between the adopting parents and adopted child; if they are treated well the children will love them; if not, not. For example, Atyook says that he loves his adopting parents better than his real ones; Kurma detested his and though he has now left them for twenty years he still bears a grudge against them. For the adults concerned adoption is generally a matter of convenience; a man with a large family (a son will only be given away if there are at least two others at home) places a son without expense to himself and assures his future; the adopters get a general servant and a support in their old age. Adopting parents naturally pay all the marriage expenses of their adopted son.

Very occasionally a girl is adopted; there was one case of this

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in the village. Chelim, who was himself adopted and who has in turn adopted a young boy, has also adopted the daughter of his younger brother (this brother who lives in another village has six daughters and no sons). This is done to get the services of a child; the adopting parents also get the marriage payments.

It is generally considered that the parents of large families do well by their children in giving them to childless relations to bring up as their heirs; it is considered though rather deplorable to give one's child to complete strangers or to people quite unrelated. For the adopted children however the situation appears to be unpleasant and emotionally complicated; children are seldom given away before the age of about four, by which time the patterns of affection within the biological family have been firmly established; consequently there is a considerable emotional struggle, and in nearly all the histories of adopted children that I obtained there are frequent stories of running home to the real parents, and of being beaten and sent back. An adopted child is lonely; adults do not normally talk to or play with children once they have achieved physical independence; and the isolation of Lepcha houses renders contact with neighbouring children, if there are any, slight and intermittent. It seems also (though with so few cases it is difficult to generalise) that the adopting parents have a tendency to make the child work harder than the real parents would do. Adopting parents are generally considerably older than the biological parents—adoption before the age of forty is uncommon—and more set in their ways; and the child has no companions to share his labours with him and lessen them with play. Adopted children appeared rather silent and awkward; they were more sullen than those children who lived with a group of siblings, and, unlike only children, neither demanded nor received attention from adults. After weaning normal Lepcha children habitually depend more on their elder siblings than on their parents; there seems to me to be a tendency to identify with elder siblings rather than with parents (owing to the extension of family terms and groupings a couple's first child is still likely to have 'elder siblings') and to participate, through this identification, in their emotional and sexual life. This phase of development is lost for adopted children; also they usually have not witnessed childbirth—children are normally always present at subsequent births in the household—and they appear to develop a complex of emotions around facts which are very simply accepted by the vast majority of children. Of the six adults who were

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597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed
592 death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

[*Lamaism, or, as it is sometimes called, Mahayana Buddhism, is a subject of the greatest complexity, to the study of which scholars of world-wide repute have devoted their whole lives. Its organisation is as elaborate as that of the medieval Catholic church, its hagiology, demonology and ritual are infinitely more complicated, and it is split into nearly as many sub-sects as contemporary Christianity. My ignorance of Tibetan prevents me discussing it in any great detail. Among the Lepchas of Zongu the practices of lamaism present more variety of detail than any other single facet of their lives; my notes on lamaist ritual far exceed those on any other subject. I had at one moment considered comparing the lamaism as I saw it practised in Lingthem with the accounts given by other people of more orthodox practices in unmixed lamaist communities, but even confining myself to those rites at which I was present, I soon discovered that the bulk of the material involved would be out of all proportion to its place in the social and religious life of the Lepchas. I have therefore limited myself to a generalised account of the impact of lamaism on the life of the Lepchas of Zongu; in practically no instances have I given the details of ritual or of the fabrication of ritual objects, not because I do not know them, but because they would overweight what is from my point of view a subsidiary subject. To a lesser degree these remarks also apply to the rituals of the Mun and to the extremely elaborate mythology and folklore derived from both religions. Possibly in the future (I hope with the collaboration of Mr. C. J. Morris) I may publish the full details of the ritual and belief of both religions in a different work.*]

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The discussion of the Lepchas' religion is rendered extremely complicated by the fact that they practise simultaneously, and without any feeling of theoretical discomfort, two (or possibly three) mutually contradictory religions: of these the older Lepcha

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771 religion is nameless but, on the analogy of lamaism, I propose calling
it the Mun religion (after the title of the priests); the worship of
756 the people of Mayel, which was possibly originally separate, forms nowadays a part of the Mun religion; and this religion is in all its major beliefs opposed to lamaism. For the Mun priesthood goes by the possession of a manifestation of a supernatural spirit which is attached to a family line, so that there can never be more than one simultaneously in each group (there may be two in one biological family, one spirit descending from the father's group, and one from the mother's). The chief function of the Mun is to ward off the misfortunes and illnesses caused by devils, which is done, partly by sacrifices, especially animal sacrifices, and partly by direct communing with the supernaturals. On certain occasions the Mun become possessed by their guardian spirit and prophesy; at death ceremonies they summon the soul of the dead man to speak his last wishes through their mouth, and then conduct it into the *rum lyang*—the place of the Gods—where it is reborn as an infant, and grows up to an eternal life similar to the life here on earth.

771 In lamaism on the contrary priesthood and sanctity are acquired
by learning and not by inspiration; the sacrifice of animals is a
779 heinous sin; the future can be learned by calculations from the holy books and not by inspiration; the soul of the dead wanders for a short time in a sort of purgatory, before being reincarnated either in another form on this earth, or going to some heaven or hell, as different as imagination can make them from anything experienced on earth. Most important of all, lamaist ethics are founded on a belief in individual destiny and a sense of sin; lamaism contains a long, explicit and detailed list of sins which can be performed by human beings, and which are visited on the evil-doer, first by feelings of remorse and secondly by punishment either in this life or in future reincarnations. Lepchas have a word for sin, because they have borrowed the Tibetan word, but they have, I think, no idea of sin; and the only act to which the word is commonly applied is to the killing of animals; by a few who have accepted lamaism it is also applied to envy or slander, expressed in thought, word or deed. With these exceptions they do not use the word 'sin,' *la-yo*, in connection with individual behaviour; the supernatural sanctions which punish disapproved-of actions are expressed as *nam-toak*, a year of disaster which affects the whole community. Even for acts less violently disapproved of, which

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incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lama [illegible] supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

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000 essential; according to the su[illegible]tural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

771 The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand,
779 collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have
756 stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid
787 excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the
777 harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

756 Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men
771 flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and
779 also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing
787 into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies.
[824] For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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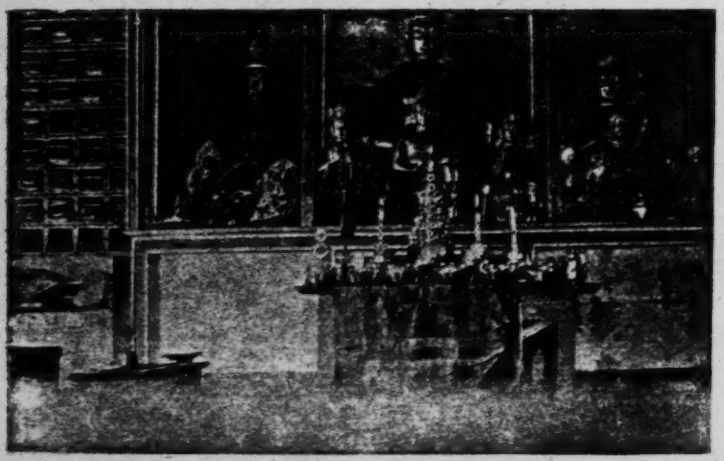

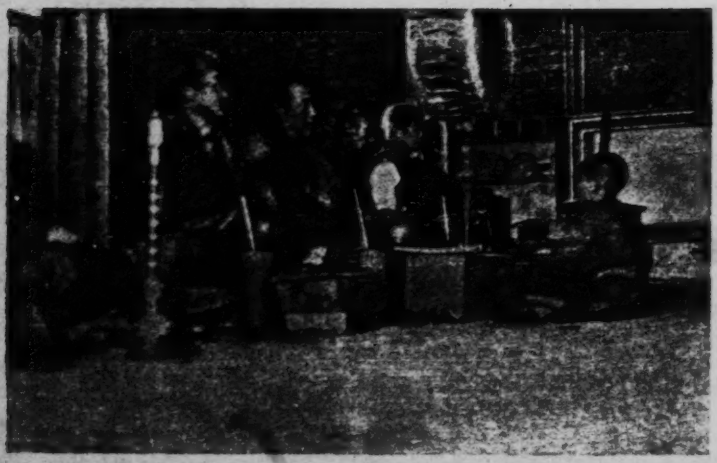

Above: THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below: THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *patyoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

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787 The interpretations of certain dreams are emotionally neutral: other dreams are said to be meaningless. Thus to dream that a living person is lying dead merely means that the person dreamt of is lying sleeping with a full belly. To dream that you yourself are flying means that you have inadvertently eaten birds' droppings. Meaningless dreams are dreams of running, of local landscapes, of naked people, and so on. Everybody with whom I discussed the subject denied the existence of dreams with a manifestly sexual content, whether permissive or incestuous, or of committing crimes; the only sexual dream allowed for is the woman's monthly dream of copulation with a supernatural. If a man's wife is sleeping with an unpermitted partner the man will be apprised of the fact by dreaming of the big wooden ladle which is used for pouring the water on to the *chi*; if the partner is a permitted one the man will not have this dream, but he may suffer from diarrhoea; in that case he will ask his wife to procure a portion of the 'younger brother's' clothing which he will wear; this will clear up the symptoms.

Everybody dreams to a certain extent, but this varies with the individual; it is believed that much dreaming foretells a long life, and little dreaming a short one. There is no necessity to try to recollect dreams if they are dim or forgotten on waking. According to lamaist theory the child in the womb dreams continuously about its previous incarnation; it thinks it is going to be born and makes up its mind to inform its parents of its future plans; but when the cord is cut most of this knowledge goes; just a little remains in the infant's dreams, but that too disappears before he has learned to talk.

As an illustration of the interpretation of dreams I can give two prophetic dreams which were made about me on an occasion when I was slightly unwell with a stomach upset, followed by a head-ache. Both the dreams were told to me by the dreamers as soon as I saw them, and before I had said that I had been unwell; Tafoor indeed came to see me because of the dream. He had dreamed that while we were living in the monastery he and the other lamas came up to practise their musical instruments for the reception of some great lady. The doors opened outwards instead of inwards, and beside them was some dried buckwheat. These were sure signs that there was illness in the monastery.[1]

[1] It may be of interest to record that the last three times that he saw me Tafoor said on each occasion that his heart was heavy about me and that he feared that when I left I should have some misfortune or illness. At the time

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787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nying-ma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

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into the lamaseries. The fact that in the beginning of the eighteenth 175
century King Chador invented an alphabet for them so that they could read the scriptures suggests that by that date the majority were already converted; but for a long time—and even today in some of the monasteries of Sikkim—Lepchas and other foreigners are not accepted for training as lamas, this privilege being exclusive to pure-born and healthy Tibetans and Sikkimese (Bhotiyas). But in lamaism the layman has practically no rôle at all; he cannot pray to, address or influence the supernaturals save through the intermediary of a lama; and therefore conversion to lamaism without admission to instruction could mean little more than a sort of voluntary tax. The first monastery in Sikkim, that of Sanga Chelling, was founded in 1697, the Talung monastery in 1789, Lingthem monastery in 1855, and Gyatong in 1860.[4] The Lepcha monasteries are said to be under the jurisdiction of Pemiongchi monastery—the largest in Sikkim—which belongs to the Lhatsun-pa sub-sect of the Nyingma-pa.

Like all other religions lamaism is a compound of a number of 179
heterogeneous elements. The chief component is Mahayana Buddhism, or 'the greater vehicle' (itself an elaboration of Hinayana or primitive Buddhism—'the lesser vehicle'), to which has accreted a good deal of tantric Hinduism, some Chinese and Mongolian elements, and possibly the original Tibetan Bön-po religion.[5] Like other religions too, lamaism presents three aspects: a justifying mythology and scriptures, an ethic, and a social organisation.

The foundation and justification of lamaism is contained in the scriptures, above all in the two enormous collections of holy writings, the Kangyour or commandments (the Bible) and the Tangyour or commentaries (the Talmud). In these, together with other minor works, are to be found all knowledge and all necessary instruction for the conduct of life. The books have by themselves a talismanic virtue, and the reading of them is the essential preliminary to acquiring merit. These books apparently contain a

[4] I have taken these dates, and one or two other general statements from *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, vol. 1 (Calcutta 1894), particularly from the section *Lamaism in Sikkim* (pp. 241–391) by L. A. Waddell. Here, as in his book *The Buddhism of Tibet* (2nd. edition Heffer's, 1934), Dr. Waddell is exclusively concerned with the Tibetans and Sikkimese, and only mentions the Lepchas incidentally.

[5] Some modern critics suggest that this Bön-po religion may be the remnants of an historically earlier and unrecorded conversion of Tibet to Buddhism.

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779 very great variety of matter. Hinayana Buddhism was an atheist religion, and lamaism, though it deals with and reveres countless hosts of supernaturals, is in a way also atheist; it contains no major God or father-figure, and also no mother-surrogate. In many ways, as the early missionaries especially noted, lamaism in its organisation and ritual corresponds very closely with Roman Catholicism; but in their hagiology there is no equivalent to God the Father, or to the Virgin Mary; their gods, with their countless incarnations, correspond rather to the saints. Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché, is an object of special love and reverence, and might be likened emotionally to Jesus Christ. In the iconography and legends Guru Rimpuché is almost always a young man, an 'elder brother', rather than a 'father'. The demonology is as elaborate as the hagiology, but here also there is no principal figure.

The lamaist ethic is founded on the belief of the immortality of the soul, the principle of reincarnation, and on an automatic justice which rewards individual virtue and punishes individual sin in this and future incarnations; and, as a derivative, that an individual's condition in this life is the result of his actions in previous incarnations. This determinism is modified by behaviour during each life; and the object of the lamaist is by the active practice of virtue and the negative abstention from sin so to improve the soul that it can eventually escape from 'the wheel of cause and effect' and enter into the bliss of Nirvana or non-existence. The long list of sins of which a person is capable derive from three main causes—lust, ill-will and stupidity; virtue is acquired partly from abstention from acts deriving from such sources, partly by practising their opposites (love instead of hate, freeing captive animals instead of slaying them), and chiefly by the practice of religious ritual, including mystic contemplation. These last methods of acquiring perfection are only open to lamas; all that it is possible for laymen to do is to abstain from sin and support the lamas, in the hope that they will be rewarded by being themselves lamas in their next incarnations. Lamas and laymen alike can gain merit by repeating, or causing to be repeated, various prayers or *mantra*; the most famous of these is the six-syllabled *Om! mani pudme hum!* which is believed to be of great efficacy. It is not necessary to say these prayers with the lips; if they are inscribed on anything and this inscribed prayer is moved it is the equivalent to the actual uttering of the prayer. There are a number of devices for this automatic praying, the chief of which is the prayer wheel; prayer-wheels

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are made in every size, from the smallest to be held and turned in the hand, to enormous ones several times bigger than a man, all stuffed with repetitions of the *mantra*; every turn of these wheels is an acquisition of merit and a remission of sin. It is not even necessary that the pray-er should go to the effort of turning these wheels; wheels driven by mechanical power are just as efficient. Tafoor has four water-turned prayer-wheels set over a small stream by his house. The next most conspicuous method of automatic praying is the prayer-flag; this consists of a piece of cloth stamped with various *mantra* and attached to a pole; each time the wind makes the cloth flutter it is as if the prayer were uttered. There are a variety of these flags, some being for the benefit of the dead and others for that of the living. Finally the inscription of a *mantra* on stone (either in Tibetan or preferably Lenza characters) and set into a monument or building, acts as though this inscribed prayer was being said continuously.

The metaphysical beliefs of the lamas concerning the soul are various and self-contradictory. The soul of man can die, but the soul is immortal. The soul can be devoured by demons or destroyed by sorcery and will nevertheless be reincarnated. With the exception of the earth itself and certain mountains, which are the homes of supernaturals, everything possesses a soul; but the souls of rocks and plants are very weak and only survive as long as their owner survives. With plants every seed, as soon as it is formed, possesses a potential soul of its own, as does a cutting, as soon as it is separated from the parent plant and stuck in the ground. It is a meritorious act to increase vegetable souls but no punishable sin is committed by destroying them.

The souls of animals (with the exception of leeches and mosquitoes, which are believed to be emanations of devils and soul-less) are far more important; it is a major sin to destroy an animal for it is possible that its soul may be that of an ex-human being; and pious people will erect prayer-flags for animals killed through accident or in the normal course of human life. Partly by divination, and partly by the observation of footprints near the place where the body was disposed of, it is possible to tell if the soul of a recently dead relative has been reincarnated as an animal; if this does occur it is said that the near relations should abstain from eating this species of animal. I never came across nor heard of such an instance of ritual prohibition, for dead people are never discovered to have migrated into any animal which was fit to eat.

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774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
[751] its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.*
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

* The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

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(*a*) LUMBA *CHITHEMBU*
(*b*) JIROONG *CHÉNÉ* IN TIBETAN HAT
(*c*) SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON WITH THE HAT OF HIS RANK

(*d*) THE PAINTER MONK, LHARIBU CHUJÉN OF PANUNG
(*e*) ASHYOK *YOUMI*, WEARING THE OLD-FASHIONED WOVEN LEPCHA HAT

[facing p. 192]

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and they are expected to support, at any rate in part, the Dorjé Lapoon and the monastery custodian; they also have to give fixed contributions to the feasts which validate the rise in grade of the higher ecclesiastics.

The Lepchas have been converts to lamaism at least one, and probably two centuries, but they have, if I may so express it, sterilised and ignored those aspects of the alien religion which were sharply opposed to their major existing attitudes. They have as it were, swallowed lamaism whole, but excreted the irritating portions. The mythology presented no difficulties; their pantheon was always large and expanding, through the divination of new supernaturals, and further numbers of similar supernaturals were easily accepted; it was understandable that foreigners should know of large numbers of new ones, almost as worthy of worship as the older established ones. The idea of a priesthood in which the priests need training by older priests was also one they already possessed; and that priests should be designated by divination (the horoscope) or by heredity, rather than by the possession of a hereditary spirit was an easy modification of existing attitudes. So too was the idea that the future could be learned by calculation, as well as by dreams and inspiration; the Lepchas have a complete belief in horoscopes and have incorporated them into their lives. Similarly the idea that an essential part of the efficacy of ritual lies in word-for-word repetition was one they already possessed; that, instead of learning by rote, these rituals could be found through the alien art of reading, was to their mind a distinct advantage for lamaism, and the books and those that read them are respected and revered. Similarly mystic contemplation, to expel devils or acquire supernatural powers, had its parallel in the *munthen*, the mystic communion, of the Mun.

The social organisation was a more alien concept; to a certain, though not completely formulated, extent, they have equated the organisation of lamas with that of the family; for a lama to sleep with the wife of an inferior lama is likened to the incest of an elder brother sleeping with his younger brother's wife, though there are no sanctions against such acts; the Dorjé Lapoon are equated with the grandfathers who withdraw from work at the end of their lives to be supported by their sons and grandsons. Nevertheless this parallel does not hold good altogether, and, in so far as they have accepted the social organisation of lamaism the Lepchas have incorporated a new and alien element into their lives. This

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new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

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religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

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793 no circumstances can the biological father teach his own son; any other relative who is properly qualified may do so. Thus Chimpet 875 was being taught by his 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon. If the teacher resides in the same house no formalities occur, but this is very rare; nearly always teachers are strangers, and often live in a different village to the pupil's parents. When the teacher has been selected the parents present him with a big pig, a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and the child goes to live with his teacher for three years, usually working for his teacher in the day-time, and receiving instruction in the evening. The child is allowed to visit his parents from time to time, but if he runs away he will be beaten and sent back. According to Tafoor, when he was a student one teacher might have six or seven pupils, and in consequence emulation increased the general level of knowledge; nowadays in Zongu most teachers have only a single pupil at a time, so that there are no spurs to overcome native indolence.

The preliminary instruction is almost entirely confined to the teaching of reading; there are small excerpts from the scriptures specially prepared for this purpose; the pupil learns by heart one page at a time. He is also taught to a certain extent methods of prayer and the playing of musical instruments, but these branches are pursued more fully when the teacher has given his pupil his ceremonial qualification or *loong*. I cannot find out to what extent this notion of *loong* is Tibetan, and to what extent specifically Lepcha; it recurs in all stages of Lepcha life whenever there is a teacher-pupil situation. When the pupil has learned whatever he is being taught—the ritual of the Mun, a sacred story, the correct method of sacrificing after hunting, the offering of *sakyou faat*—his teacher gives him a scarf and usually a ceremonial meal or drink, after which the pupil does whatever he has been taught in front of and for his teacher. When the teacher has given his pupil *loong* the boy is formally presented at the monastery with the ceremony of *di-tset*. This ceremony is a very small affair; the pupil and his teacher drink tea with two lamas and then the novice is presented with some *chi*, a scarf and a rupee in the name of the monastery. A novice so received is called *chapti-bu*. Even before this reception a pupil will often accompany his teacher or father to all ceremonies, making himself useful by helping in the fashioning of ceremonial objects, by holding the big metal instruments, and possibly by beating the gongs or drums.

793 Above *chapti-bu* there are six grades of lamas; to pass from one

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grade to another demands firstly increasing knowledge and secondly validating feasts—*chaptok klon*. There must be an interval of at least three years between each rise in grade. It is expected that the expenses of the first two validating feasts will be borne by the young lama's family, the subsequent ones by himself. In the validating feasts for the higher grades everybody in the neighbourhood has to make fixed contributions. All the feasts are accompanied by prayers and readings from the scriptures. 793

The grade above *chapti-bu* is *tongpeun-bu*. These are the players of the musical instruments—the conch shells, the *galing* (a metal instrument between a clarionet and a trumpet), the long telescopic trumpet (*pak-doong*) and the flute made from a human femur (*kong-ling*). People learn how to play these instruments by watching experts; for the *galing* which has a reed mouthpiece and is capable of a variety of notes, the learner holds a grass between his teeth and copies the fingering of the player; he may also be privately taught by friends. To my Occidental ears all the music sounded like the cacophony of a zoo in a thunderstorm, but the lamas recognise and teach tunes, or, as they say, 'numbers.' The validating feast which demands a pig, two maunds of grain and four pounds of oil, only lasts one day. *Tongpeun-bu* cannot perform any offices on their own, and practically occupy the position of choristers. [534]

Next in grade comes the *kané* whose one day feast calls for an ox, three maunds of grain and a maund of *chi*. The chief business of the *kané* is looking after the monastery and assisting the Dorjé Lapoon in their ceremonies; he also plays musical instruments. The *kané* are the only people who have to visit the monastery daily, to place the bowls of water on the altars at dawn, the *chimi* at sunset, and to burn incense. In the absence of superiors the *kané* is permitted to perform all offices of which he is capable; usually however his knowledge is slight and he has to ask his superiors for help; this help must be paid for with *chi*. The *kané* roughly corresponds to a deacon.

Kané and the ranks below barely qualify as lamas; they are in a way still students. Between the *kané* and the next grade *chéné* there is a very great gap. A *chéné* can perform all offices and in the absence of superiors can overlook monastery ceremonies; if he is old and experienced enough he can take pupils. The *chéné* is really a qualified priest. His validating feast is the most expensive of all: he has to give an ox, a pig, six maunds of grain, and ten maunds of *chi*. Each household has to contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and

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eight pounds of grain. The feasting lasts for three days at the end of which period the *chéné* by himself constructs an elaborate altar and dos eworship.

After the *chéné* comes the *chithembu*. His one-day feast calls for a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of oil. Each household must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain. The *chithembu* overlooks the good order of monastery gatherings and can take disciplinary action against quarrelsome, riotous or impious people; he also has the right to beat any lama, including his superiors, who may arrive late for a service or make mistakes in the reading. There is a special thonged stick called *pankar* which is kept for this purpose in the monastery. The *chithembu* are also meant to prevent the monastery or its precincts being used for improper purposes on the days when no services are held.

Only one man at a time can hold the office of *chithembu*. *Omzet*, the grade above *chithembu* demands considerable knowledge, and there are many not over ambitious or intelligent lamas who have risen to the grade of *chithembu* but are unable to go beyond. For these people, and for such as have not completed the six years since they were *chéné* there has been created the title of *chichembu*. *Chichembu* take their part in the monastery festivals; they are allowed to, but usually do not, perform ceremonies outside. The *chichembu* roughly resemble canons. No validating feast is required for assuming this title.

The validating feast for *omzet* lasts two or three days and calls for an ox, seven loads of *chi*, two loads of grain and 20 lbs. of oil. Each household must contribute 20 lbs. of *chi* and 16 lbs. of grain. The *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon are the two highest ranks in the lamaist organisation, the Dorjé Lapoon being selected rather for their age than for any other qualification; they are the oldest and most respected of the learned lamas. The *omzet* is the instructor *par excellence*: he is in charge of all monastery ceremonies and is expected to be most learned and competent. The one-day validating feast of the Dorjé Lapoon only demands a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of butter; everybody else must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain and must present the new Dorjé Lapoon with a scarf and a rupee. The Dorjé Lapoon do no organisational work beyond examining candidates before each rise in grade; they particularly go in for mystic practices and contemplation and they alone are capable of conducting the

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dead man's soul on its journey through the other worlds after death. 793
The Dorjé Lapoon are supposed to have renounced the things of this world; they are meant to be without property and to renounce such as they do possess; their nourishment is meant to be looked after by the other villagers; and, since they are meant to be fairly ascetic, it is expected that the Dorjé Lapoon will feast the other lamas yearly on their superfluity. Both *omʒet* and Dorjé Lapoon can perform the mystic ceremony of *kong-so klon*: this ceremony, performed fasting in a dark room to make up for arrears of duties left undone and to appease the devils in the neighbourhood, is believed to be fraught with considerable danger which would result in the death of anybody not properly qualified who tried to perform it. The rank of *omʒet* corresponds fairly closely to that of bishop; but as far as I know there is no equivalent in the Christian hierarchy to the rank of Dorjé Lapoon.

There are about twenty lamas attached to the monastery of Lingthem; eleven live permanently in the village, two others more or less permanently; the rest live in neighbouring villages. The two Dorjé Lapoon are the father of Datoop and the 'big father' of Tafoor; they are always addressed and referred to by their title. Tafoor and Ongden are *omʒet*, Tafoor being by far the more learned; Datoop is *chichembu*, Lumba *chithembu*, Jiroong *chéné*, Chudo and Pembu *kané*, Chanko (Ongden's eldest son), Chano and Takal *chapti-bu*. All the *tongpeun-bu* live in the neighbouring villages. Chano and Takal are both full-grown men—Chano is thirty and Takal fifty-seven—but they are both too stupid to rise above the lowest rank. There are four boys studying to become lamas: they are Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged eighteen, Tafoor's eldest son Chimpet, aged fourteen, Chano's eldest 'son' Mikmar, aged thirteen, and Chudo's eldest son aged four. The last named has not yet started to learn to read, but he is dressed in lama's clothes, and he plays on the floor at conducting services; this is [787] considered to be a most auspicious omen, and when he does start studying he should learn quickly and easily.

Corresponding with the hierarchy of lamas there is a hierarchy 792
of nuns (*in-é-bu*). Each rise in grade carries the same validating feast of a load of *chi*, 40 lbs. of grain and ten lbs. of oil or butter. The titles are similar, but they are completely pointless. Nuns cannot conduct ceremonies or perform exorcisms; in a very few of the lama's services, chiefly those connected with death, they have a subordinate role. There is no sort of compulsion or prophetic

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'192 horoscope which forces a woman to become a nun; the duties are undertaken through individual piety, though it would seem as though the influence of father or husband was preponderating; of the nine nuns in Lingthem six were the wives or daughters of lamas: the other three were the wives of laymen who came from distant villages and I did not find out the positions of their fathers. A nun can start to study at any time between marriage and old age, taking as a teacher either a lama or the Dorjé Lapoon or *omzet* nun. Literacy is not insisted on for nuns and by far the greater number are in fact illiterate; the worship of nuns consists in the turning of prayer-wheels and the chanting of *mantra*. From such information as I can obtain nuns play a very small rôle in other Sikkim monasteries; and I suspect that the organisation prevailing in Lingthem is a Lepcha elaboration designed to give equal opportunity to men and women, since the Lepchas have a tendency not to disqualify anybody from any pursuit on account of sex.

Owing to the personality of the holder one exception must be made to the generalisation that the nuns' grades are meaningless. Mrs. Datoop was *inébu chithembu* and she showed that she would be well able to wield the *pankar* if necessary. Men say that they would be ashamed to be beaten by a woman, but they would not be able to protest.

The nuns are meant to spend three days every month at the monastery, worshipping by circumambulating the monastery turning their hand prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* and sitting in the *lha-gong* turning the big wheels to the accompaniment of the same chant. These visits take place on the 9th of the Tibetan month in honour of Chérézé, on the 14th in honour of Zobu Sangé Chumdendé, and on the 31st in honour of Guru Rimpuché. Little attention is paid to these festivals and often only two or three nuns turn up. Unlike the lamas, whose conduct is not so controlled, the nuns have to observe certain prohibitions; on the eve of a monastery visit they must not eat an evening meal nor copulate with their husbands; and on the day of the visit they must avoid eating meat and drinking *chi*. Most of the nuns, and all the more pious ones, were old women.

iv

'193 The duties and devotions of lamas can be divided into three categories: personal and individual devotions, set monthly and

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APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.

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793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

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796 year. There are actually only forty-two householders for twenty-four feasts, but some of the richer households or those which consist of more than one working family give the feasts by themselves. The feasts for Guru Rimpuché are provided by lamas, those for Kinchenjunga by laymen. The duration of the ceremony depends upon the amount of food and drink provided; if the feast is plentiful, it may last thirty-six hours, starting at sunset on the preceding evening and continuing till the following dawn; if the feast is a poor one it will only last during the daylight hours of the day of ceremony.

In essentials the ceremonies are all similar. An altar-piece—its elaboration depending on the size of the festival—is fabricated by the competent lamas out of a variety of materials, of which the chief are flour mixed to a paste, butter either white or coloured and occasionally coloured threads. The ground-work 778 of the altar pieces are blocks of wood, usually flat for Guru 796 Rimpuché and raised in five mounds (thrones) for Kinchenjunga. On these are placed more-or-less life-like dough images of the chief gods, surrounded by innumerable and almost shapeless cones to represent the minor gods and attendants and satellites. Round the image of Kinchenjunga are represented the hundred gods which inhabit the body of the donor of the feast. Those dough images are decorated with white and coloured butter to represent their clothes and jewels. Sometimes a 'halo' shaped like an arum leaf is placed behind the chief gods; the halo consists of elaborate and very pretty flower decorations made in coloured butter on tin shields. Occasionally the altar-piece is surmounted by small dough birds fixed on thin splinters of bamboo; or alternatively there is added to the monastery altars materials which are practically always used in private and personal ceremonies: a *deu* or 'palace of supernaturals' consisting of elaborate geometrical shapes in coloured thread fastened round a central bamboo; and splinters with tufts of wool stuck at odd intervals down their length which are called *pong* and which are considered to represent the clouds which surround the homes of the supernaturals. Always before the commencement of the preparation of the altar-piece a small cone is made to represent Gett'r *moong*, the demon of quarrels. The quarrel demon is first invoked and then destroyed in order to prevent quarrelling or evil words taking place during the ensuing ceremony and feast.

796 When the altar is prepared the musicians start playing in twos and threes and big groups. If the altar has been made the night

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before the ceremony the musicians will continue playing at intervals all night, but the laymen do not start arriving till the next morning. 796 In the morning all those who have been invited by the givers of the feast, which, except in the case of very poor people or very unpopular ones, means practically the whole village, start arriving at the monastery, each bringing with them some contribution in the form of food or *chi*, which will be of assistance to the giver of the feast. During the whole day the lamas sit in their seats in two parallel rows from the altar to the door, except when they go out for a slight rest and change of air. Their food and drink is brought to them at their seats in the monastery and they have permanently a *patyoot* of *chi* in front of them. The worship consists of special readings and chantings from the sacred scriptures interspersed with music.

Owing to the fact that the feasts in honour of Kinchenjunga are given by laymen certain precautions are taken and certain opportunities are given for acquiring merit which are not considered necessary for the feasts given by lamas. The precautions consist of the offering of *cherkem*—grain floating in *chi*—which is thrown out to the devils by a layman with cries of *Lo chi-do*—' take this ' —and the burning of a bonfire of aromatic herbs and leaves to gratify the supernaturals. The lay-giver may, if he wishes, acquire merit by performing the ceremonial dance called *da-floh* before the [535] altar, prancing and chanting in front of a folded cloth on the top of which his hat is laid, with the knife to the right and the scabbard to the left. In the evening the altar-piece is perambulated three times round the monastery and is then broken up; the dough is eaten (lamas however may not eat it) and the butter smeared on the heads of those standing round; this butter is regarded as a sort of sacrament which conveys blessings on those whose head is smeared with it. The Dorjé Lapoon in person anoints the heads of the lay-givers of the feasts and their families. Although this ends the religious part of the ceremony, gossiping and drinking may continue all night if sufficient *chi* has been provided.

Calendrical festivals take place frequently, at relatively fixed dates throughout the year. The greater number are apotropaic, intended to ward away those evils inherent in the season: illness in the winter and summer, hail and predatory animals when the crops are growing, quarrelling when the harvests are gathered, misfortunes in the new year, and so on. These ceremonies vary very considerably in elaboration. Some, such as the ceremony to

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appease Débrong *pa-no*, the king of hail, will be performed semi-privately in the house of the officiating lama, a little grain for the sacrifice having been collected by the *gyapön* from every household in the village so that the ceremony is felt to be for the benefit of the whole community, though practically none may be present at it. Others are extremely elaborate; Boom koor lasts for three days. This ceremony is somewhat similar to beating the bounds; the sixteen volumes of the Boom are carried in procession with all the musical instruments by the lamas in their finest dresses, all round the village; the procession follows a fixed route with points where it stops for prayers and feasting, the feast taking place in the biggest house in the neighbourhood and being provided by all the dwellers in that district; the procession itself takes forty-eight hours and the night is spent at some house half-way distant on the route, in the procession I saw, at the Mandal's house. The evening before the procession starts an elaborate ceremony is held to ward off all the predatory animals and thieves and destructive demons who would harm the growing crops; and when the procession has returned to the monastery and the sacred books have been replaced an all night service and picnic follows. This ceremony is held after the sowing of crops is completed to protect the crops and ward off all evil from the community; everybody except infants in arms, invalids, and the old and infirm join in it.

To describe in detail all the calendrical ceremonies which I have witnessed, let alone those that I have been told about, would be beyond the scope of this book. The ceremonies occur at almost weekly intervals, and though each differs considerably in detail from all the others, the general effect and intention of all are very similar. An extremely elaborate and detailed effigy of the supernatural whom it is intended to appease is made; the supernatural is invoked with prayer, music, readings from the scripture and gifts; is adored as a god; and then, whether it be in general benevolent or malevolent, is prayed to go away, and its image is taken some way away and abandoned or destroyed. Some of the ceremonies which take place outside the monastery are accompanied by parallel ceremonies performed by Mun.

I only propose to describe in detail a single calendrical ceremony, the destruction of the quarrel demon, which takes place in the autumn. This ceremony is more vivid and dramatised than the greater number of lamaist exorcisms; its details however resemble most of the other exorcisms.

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Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils Soo-*moong* (enmity of speech), Gé-*moong* (enmity of thought) and Thor-*moong* (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity Soo-gé-thor is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead. 796 578

First of all a very large image of the supernatural Thorgyop *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of Soo-gé-thor and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block[7] on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan 'we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man'. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs. 796 [532]

Another image is made of Soo-gé-thor, this time recumbent and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures. [532]

Finally a third image called Sor-so-mu is made; this is a three-sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to [532]

[7] A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year 'animal' cycle.

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is the direction in which the devil has gone. Should the pointed end turn backwards, that is towards the thrower, it is a very bad omen; it means that quarrelling will take place in the succeeding year.

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The exorcisms and apotropaic rites performed by lamas for the benefit of individuals are even more numerous and varied than the calendrical rites. There is scarcely an ill which man is heir to which has not its individual and appropriate ceremonial remedy. Like the calendrical ceremonies by far the greater number consist of making an image of the possessing devil, invoking it, worshipping it, and then destroying it.[8] Besides the image of the central devil there are always a number of minor ritual objects, the most important of which is a twisted piece of dough called *chongbu-tipkü*. At the end of the ceremony the sufferer, or, in some cases all present, have this piece of dough ceremonially waved over them (*pék*) by the officiating lama as a ritual cleansing. In the greater number of ceremonies this is the only rôle which the sufferer plays. He is often not even in the same room as the lamas. At the beginning of the service the devil is always erected facing the lamaist altar; when the ceremony is finished the model with its stand is turned round to face the house-door; a double line of flour is traced from the devil to the door as the route it must take to go out, and the image on its board is then carried away either into the forest or to the place where four roads meet. For some exorcisms those who carry the devil have to go through some ritual or be ceremonially purified before they are readmitted into the house.

In some of the exorcisms a dough image of the sufferer is made and offered to the devil in lieu of the body of the sufferer; and in others, especially when it is divined that the devil has been sent through human agency (usually unwittingly: evil or envious thoughts can unleash a devil without the responsibility of the thinker) the devil, in the form of a winged insect, is ritually killed by the lamas with their sacred dagger. Finally, in some apotropaic ceremonies the threatened person himself plays a rôle; thus, for the ceremony *doak-po doat* the sufferer has to progress through the smaller squares of a big magic square, gradually having all his appearance changed: he starts off dressed in black, carrying a stick,

[8] Outlines and descriptions of some lamaist ceremonies will be found in Chapter Thirteen and especially in Appendix III.

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and ends up dressed in white with a bow and arrow. This is 755
believed to fool the devil, as is the device of taking a new name for a year.

Some of the sacrificial objects are elaborate and expensive and demand several hours and a great deal of material to make. All the [779]
rituals are described in various sacred books, and when making the sacrificial objects these books are always consulted.

I think the nearest parallel to the attitude of the Lepchas towards 751
lamaist and Mun ceremonies can be found in that of an ignorant and somewhat hypochondriac European towards germs (the devils) and vitamins (the gods). There are a number of precautionary antiseptic measures to be taken against germs: salad is washed in disinfectant, food wrapped up in cellophane, children not kissed for fear of infection, the nose held when there is a bad smell from a drain, inoculations made against the fear of various diseases at regular intervals. Psychologically these precautions correspond almost exactly to the general and regular apotropaic services, either those held for the whole community or the obligatory consultations which have to take place at the beginning of each twelve-year cycle after the third. Once a germ has got a hold the disease has to be diagnosed and various remedies applied, for some of which you call in a doctor while others are traditional. These remedies correspond to the special services held in the case of illness or misfortune, the lama being rather regarded in the light of the consultant specialist and the Mun as the purveyor of old-world and traditional remedies. To keep in good health one has to follow certain rules about ventilation and sunlight and a correctly balanced diet. For the Lepchas these precepts are replaced by the worship of the gods. It is important to worship the gods and to have plenty of vitamins but to drive away devils and to get rid of germs is emotionally far more urgent and important. Though the other-worldly aims of lamaism are on the lips of some lamas they do not seem to me to be of great emotional importance; people say 'there are fewer devils here now that we have the lamas and their books' rather as they might say 'there is less diphtheria here now that we have got the new drainage system'. Though the lamas are considered to have driven away a number of the older devils an almost equally great number of new devils have been brought in following the arrival of Sikkimese and Nepali, as new diseases have arisen from new occupations and conditions of life to replace those which have been destroyed by a stricter application of hygiene.

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755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child [855] is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

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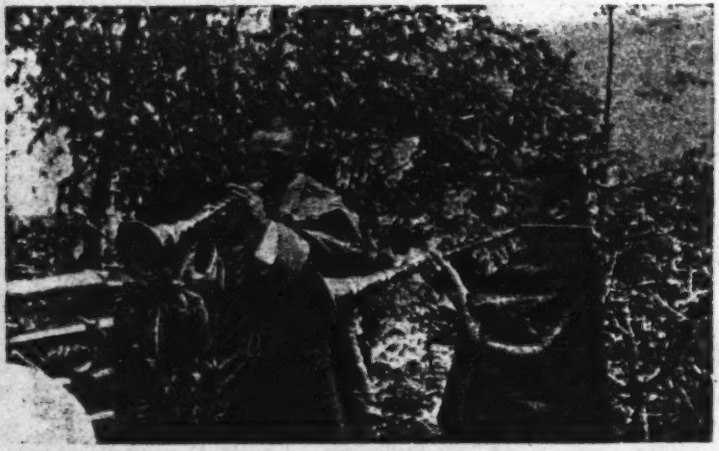

LAMAS PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MONASTERY COURTYARD

Above : The son of Lharibu Chujen and Tafoor play ' clarionets '.

Below : Kutt'r, Lumba's son, and Chado play telescopic trumpets.

[facing p. 208]

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858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

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787 fourth, twelve-year cycle to discover what is foretold for the next twelve years, and, in the event of illnesses or misfortunes being threatened, to perform the indicated apotropaic ceremonies. These consultations are repeated every twelve years. The final horoscope is cast immediately after death; this shows the cause of death, the future state of the man's soul and his next reincarnation, the most propitious mode of disposing of the body, the direction in which the body should be carried and the people who should handle it, and also what ceremonies should be performed to prevent the death-causing devil from attacking further members of the household, or, if the devil has gone elsewhere, into whose house the devil has entered.[9]

Though entirely mechanical the casting of horoscopes is an elaborate and difficult business which entails the collating and interpreting of a great number of cross-references. In Lingthem the only lamas who know how to do so are the two Dorjé Lapoon and Tafoor, and in nearly all cases it is Tafoor who is consulted.

787 805 Years are reckoned by four different and independent cycles: the most important, and the only one laymen know of is the twelve-year 'animal cycle'; next in importance comes the ten-year 'element' cycle; the importance of these two reside in the fact that a person is considered to possess the qualities of the animal and element of his year, and in horoscope conjunctions these qualities are of the greatest importance.[10] There are also two independent nine-year cycles founded on different magic squares (*mariwã and parrko*) so that, calculating by the year alone there are 9,720 different combinations. Besides the year calculations there are also calculations for the hour (of birth or death), the time (morning, midday, evening, etc.), the day, the month, the stars, the birth number, and so on. Altogether there are between ten and sixteen cross-references, depending on the elaboration of the horoscope, which can be made to check, counter-check and modify one another. Any apparent contradictions arising from the various modes of calculation are resolved by being explained as contingent.

[9] Complete horoscopes for birth, marriage and death will be found in Appendix III.

[10] The animal cycle is Rat, Ox, Tiger, Eagle, 'Thunder-bird', Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Fowl, Dog, Pig. The element cycle (each element lasts two solar years) is Fire, Earth, Iron, Water, Wood. 1937 was Ox year and the second Fire year; 1938 Tiger year and the first Earth year.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions. 787 [732]

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest. 793

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects. [556]

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the 781 787

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781 negative results which occurred through not following their
787 instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

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member of the household go near a big stream nor pour water on the ashes in the house. Tafoor also must refrain from sexual activity, for at the time of the orgasm the gods would look down and be angry.[11] Control of rain can be as localised as is wished; it can extend over a single field or the whole of Zongu, and can be held off as long as the officiant prays. I suggested to Tafoor that he could ruin an enemy by concentrating all the time and preventing any rain falling on the enemy's fields; he agreed that this was so, but the idea seemed to him so ridiculous that he burst out laughing, although he treats this power of his otherwise very seriously and does not jest about it. The control of hail does not require the same precautions but necessitates the presence of some magical objects including a ram's horn.

There is no question but that not only Tafoor but all the people of the neighbourhood believe completely in this power of stopping rain; people from some way away will come with big presents to get Tafoor to stop rain when they want to work their fields and will work for him also as recompense. I unfortunately only found out about this claim to power of Tafoor's in the last month of my stay in Lingthem. Lingthem is very rainy and there were very few days in which no rain fell. In the last month of my stay there were six occasions when Tafoor announced beforehand that he was stopping rain and on those days no rain did in fact fall. The most extraordinary were the three days of the Boom koor ceremony whose date was fixed after some argument about a fortnight before it took place; when the date was finally decided upon Tafoor said immediately that no rain would fall during those three days, and in point of fact those were the only three days during my whole stay in Lingthem during which no rain fell. There were two other fine days during this period without rain for which I asked Tafoor if he was responsible; he said that on those days he had done nothing. In the event of rain falling while he was meant to be stopping it he has the alibi that some more powerful lama has been sending the rain away from his village to Lingthem or the neighbourhood, for the power consists only in shifting the rain and not in destroying it.

It would naturally need far longer observation than I was able to make to pronounce any judgement on this claimed power. It is worth noting that there is no sort of compulsion for the Lepchas to hire Tafoor; many people do not, because they say they cannot afford to, but everybody I questioned was certain that this

[11] Semen is called *tik-oong*—penis water.

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789 rain-control worked, and cited numerous examples from their past experience to prove it.

This is the only instance of powers which the Lepchas themselves deem supernatural being used in ordinary life. The tradition of sorcery has already been referred to; its use is so rare that it plays 832 no part in the life of most people. There is a tradition of love magic in which the hairs of the two people meant to love one another are plaited and concentrated upon. Although they know the ritual, lamas themselves say that nobody living has performed it. It is said that Mun are requested to do this by one spouse if the other is unfriendly or by parents if their child and his or her spouse disagree: I never heard of an actual instance of this and it would seem as though it were only a tradition.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGION II: THE MUN

i

As opposed to lamaism the Mun religion carries with it no social organisation; the Mun and their parallel priests are simply individuals who, through their possession by a spirit, have certain gifts and duties; unlike the lamas and the civil officers their position carries with it no sort of title in ordinary life. Besides the Mun three other types of priesthood by possession are recognised; these are the Padem, the Yaba, and the Pau. The Mun spirit is a female spirit, the other three are male. They are attached to family lines and are roughly hereditary; they often descend from grandfather to grandson or from grandmother to granddaughter; but there is no regularity about this and a man may inherit a possessing spirit from a woman, and *vice versa*; once the vehicle dies the spirit may not choose another body immediately and large groups may be without the possessing spirit for a number of years. The manifestation of the spirit (for the spirits themselves live immortal beyond Kinchenjunga) may choose anybody for its vehicle, with one exception; none of the spirits will enter a lama or his own children, though they may enter his family.

Both men and women can be Mun, but only men can be Padem (or Bum-*thing* as they are called outside Zongu); these are both pure Lepcha spirits and are essentially similar, save that the Padem are far less powerful, and that instruction by an already qualified Padem is optional, whereas for Mun a three year course of instruction is obligatory. Padem are weaker than Mun and capable of exorcising far fewer devils; they cannot prophesy nor perform the death ceremony. For many men Padem is the first step to becoming Mun; in Lingthem there are altogether eight Mun[1] of which four

[1] They are (men) Katel, Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu (Gongyop's elder brother) and Agyung (the adopted son of Serving): of these Gongyop practises regularly, Katel occasionally, the other two hardly at all. (women)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 are men; of these three were first of all Padem. Kurma is Padem only; he can diagnose but can only perform a few sacrifices and exorcisms.

The other two groups of possessed priests resemble one another and differ from Mun and Padem in so far as neither can make sacrifices nor perform exorcisms, but can merely get possessed by supernaturals; they dance until the supernatural speaks through them and discloses its wants and whereabouts. Both wear special [292] clothes for their performances: the Yaba (women are called Yama) wear bandoliers of tinkling bells and have their clothes fringed with bells; they hold a metal plate and beat it as they dance. Pau (women are called Nandjému) wear elaborate wool head-dresses and dance with a skull-drum in one hand and a bell in the other. Both Yaba and Pau are and have been very rare because the possessing spirits are not Lepcha but have been introduced through intermarriage with foreign women, the Yaba spirit comes from Limbu women (the Limbu are a Nepali tribe) and the Pau from Sikkimese-Tibetans. There is a tradition that there is a similar spirit called Jhankri belonging to the Chetri,[2] but this spirit has never manifested itself among the Lepchas as there has been no inter-marriage between the two groups.

There is only one representative of this group in Lingthem: the 'elder grandmother' of Patek, an old woman over seventy, is a Nandjému. The service of these diviners is only called in when lama and Mun fail to agree on a diagnosis, or when there is reason to suppose that a new devil has taken up its abode in the neighbourhood. In such cases a Pau or Yaba, usually from another village, will be called in to discover its home and its needs.

754 It is believed that there are two sorts of Mun, a good group
756 called Tang-li Mun and a bad group called Mun-mook Mun; the difference is similar to the traditional difference between white and black magicians. 'Mun-mook Mun are like thieves: they think and do evil and are possessed by devils which they employ for their own selfish ends; they alone can send devils (the term used for sorcery).' They are believed to have an influence like the evil

Pumri (wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon), the elder wife of Lumba *chithembu* (she is the daughter of Pumri and has the paternal spirit) the 'younger grandmother' of Patek, and the sister of Jiroong (the wife of Kaji). All four women practise.

[2] This Lepcha tradition is incorrect: the Chetri are a fairly pure Hindu tribe; the Jhankri occur among the Gurung.

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PLATE 14

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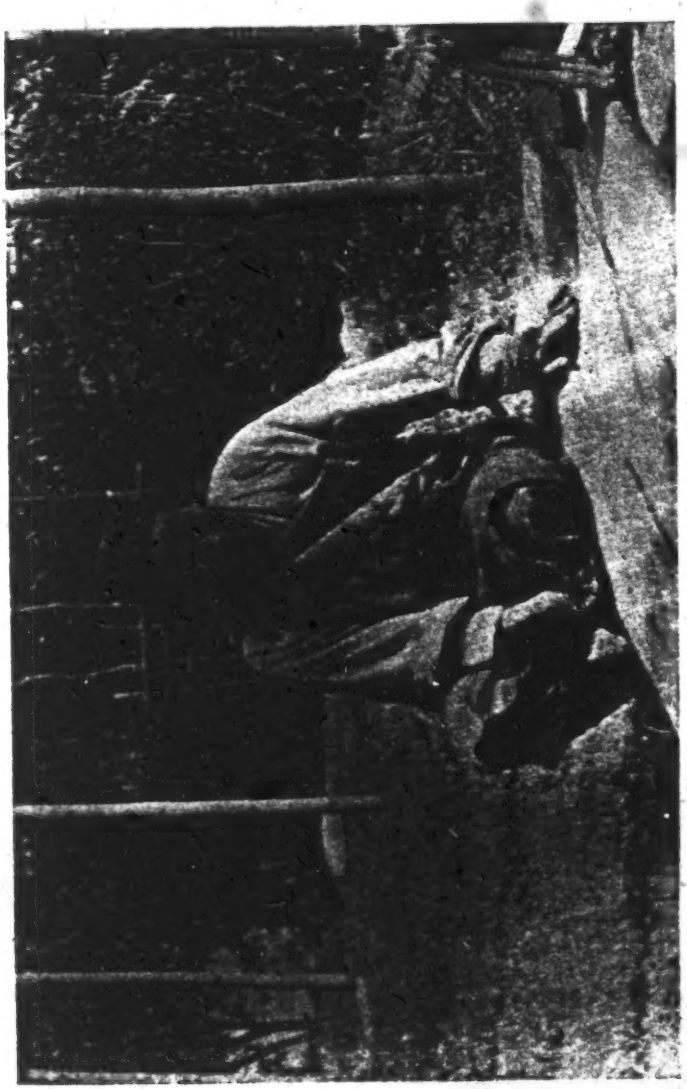

THE MUN GONGYOP

[facing p. 216]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls
[195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of
[152] falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervousness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

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159 756 Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about [778] his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma [124 577] arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving [732] children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

work of Padem; the spirit will instruct before each ceremony as to what is needed in the way of sacrifices by means of dreams in which the spirit will be represented by Europeans or Kings of Sikkim and other States. This divination by dream never failed, before each ceremony I would dream the requisite ritual.

'After I had been a Padem for some years I was taken ill again as before, so ill that I lay like one paralysed and all my hair fell out. My senses were confused and I could neither see nor hear properly. By night I used to dream of huge bridges and roads and of myself walking and riding over them to all the countries of the world, Tibet and Bhutan and Nepal and India and Europe. There I would meet people and talk with them in their own language; in the neighbouring countries I would meet and talk to the Kings: in Europe I stayed in people's houses and there were so many houses you could not see the ground. I lay almost like one dead.

'Before I got really ill like this I was acting almost like a madman wandering into the forest and other people's houses; I did not know what I was doing and I did not recognise people. I used to travel about very quickly and not know how I had got to where I was; the neighbours called in the Mun and Padem but it was no use.

'When I lay ill the Mun and lamas exorcised unavailingly; but finally a lama recognised that I was troubled by the Mun god and he told me that I must make her my private god. The lamas then divined who was the most fitting person to perform the ceremony of *Rum keuk* (recognising the god) and decided upon an old female Mun who lived some way away. She came and a sacrifice was prepared consisting of a tray covered with offerings of dried fish and dried bird and ginger and pop corn and rice and other crops and various sorts of *chi*; this she offered to the gods saying in *tang-bor* (circumlocutions) that she was making these offerings for the invalid and would the gods please accept both them and him. An ox was then killed and she took away the intestines and the head and two legs; she was also given Rs. 5 but she gave them back and only took them for herself when I was fully instructed. When the Mun had made her sacrifice she fed me with *chi* by hand and she put a silver rupee in my hand and a ceremonial scarf round my neck and said to me "From today the *rum* will be with you and you must learn all the work of the Mun". She stayed three nights and then returned home. From that day I started recovering;

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 756 two days later I was able to go outside the house and within a month I was strong enough to go and visit the Mun. On my first visit I took with me a load of *chi*; I used to pay her visits of varying length—five, ten, or fifteen days, according to the amount of time necessary to learn completely one sort of ritual or story—and I would return home to meditate upon it before proceeding further. I studied in all three years before I could be given *loong*.[3] I had to know the history of every devil and how to exorcise it as well as the story of creation and the birth of Tak-bo-*thing* and many things more. During my training I was not allowed to eat pork or goat or chicken or hen's eggs for if I had there would have been devils I could not have controlled. At the end of my three years' training when I had got my *loong* my teacher had all the forbidden foods boiled and put in a basket; then after she had given me *chi* and butter to drink and a ceremonial scarf she told me that now I had power over all the devils and could eat all forbidden foods, after which with her own hands she gave me three mouthfuls of each sort of food. When I was given my *loong* a second ox was sacrificed; the first time I was so weak that I had to stop indoors while the sacrifice was made.

'Until I got my *loong* I could not officiate as Mun but I could continue to do so as Padem; there is no quarrel between the Padem *rum* and Mun *rum* as they are husband and wife respectively and are pleased to inhabit the same body. They do so however comparatively rarely as no woman can be Padem though she may be Mun and a man can be Padem without being Mun, and *vice versa*. A person like myself can call down Padem *rum* or Mun *rum* at will; before possession the Padem *rum* does not call down the Mun *rum* to visit him though he is pleased when she comes. The spirits are not permanently present in their dwelling;[4] they come down from their home, which is reached from a passage beyond Kinchenjunga, when they are summoned. When they do come down the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

756 "The Mun only takes full possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise; I tremble constantly and am covered with

[3] See Chapter Seven, p. 196.

[4] Gongyop constantly referred to his body as the *li*—the house of the spirits.

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY I

Above: The Mandal and Gongyos (arm only) fill the containers of the *rum* offered to the devils with milk and tea.

Below: Pumri offers strained *chi* in a cup to the gods of Kinchenjunga. Old Kahlyeu, on her left, offers grain.

[Facing p. 220]

i: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off and I offer them *chi* and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower-bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel as though a heavy burden were pressing over my shoulders and as if my flesh were being poked with sticks—zinga—zinga—zinga—zinga—; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and walk outside in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put the necklace on me the gods would be angry and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed, even the children. I blow into each person's face and on the offerings; then I scatter *chi* and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half-year. After the prophecy I recover consciousness but not till cock-crow the next day do I feel all right again.[5]

'When I am called in in the case of illness the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animal or insect or person, depending on which devil it is; thus Lum dong *moong* appears as a pig, Sor *moong* as a dirty ragged old woman, Arot *moong* as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious.

[784] 'A Mun must on no account touch a human corpse; should he do so the god will depart and he will be very ill for two months and lamas have to perform ceremonies to cure him. This is the only occasion on which the spirit will leave a Mun. A dead Mun is buried in the ordinary way and his soul has to be conducted to the *rum lyang* (place of the gods) in the normal manner; the gods

[5] All Mun do this ceremony twice a year (no more and no less) but on different days; informants agree that their prophecies are never mutually contradictory; they are always fairly generalized.

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756 which have inhabited the live body have no concern with the soul after death.'

Gongyop said on another occasion that he thinks it an unhappy thing to be a Mun. He would have preferred not to have been one himself and he prays that his son will escape the visitation. 'May Tangen *moong* spare my son.' The perquisites do not make up for the illness and the work.

Among laymen it is a very general feeling that it is a misfortune to be a Mun; as well as the psychological and physical distress there is the added fact that Mun are responsible for the killing of many animals; but the Mun themselves say that this sin is not borne by them but by the devils who make the sacrifices necessary.

The onset of possession is described in much the same way by other Mun and Padem also. Kurma who was possessed by the Padem spirit when he was ten said he felt ill and almost mad for three months; he ached so much that he could not move, his body felt as though it were going to burst. He neither saw nor heard properly; he ate little and drank nothing. At times he felt as though he were flying or sitting on trees; at other times his body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs. The symptoms disappeared after diagnosis and acceptance of the Padem god.

I was unfortunately not able to see anybody during these initial phases of possession. During my stay Mrs. Chano was diagnosed as being possessed by the Mun spirit but the sense delusions and wanderings had passed and she merely stopped at home very listless and apathetic. Gongyop performed the ceremony of dedication and was going to become her teacher.[6]

It is worth noting that except for the bi-annual prophecies[7] the Mun do not possess supernatural powers as the Lepchas understand them, and they differ in degree rather than in kind from the laymen; they can always see devils, whereas only some laymen can see them and that only on some occasions; they can always communicate with supernaturals, whereas only certain old and experienced laymen can do so. A great deal of the Mun ritual, as opposed to the divination, can be performed by laymen.

[6] This is described in Appendix III.

[7] And calling up the soul of a dead man and making him speak; but only very few Mun possess this art, and none in Lingthem. See Chapter Thirteen.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today.

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein.

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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married, and as a consequence all their children were devils and snakes and lizards. As soon as they were born their mother cast them aside without giving them milk. Finally she produced a normal child called Rilbu Shingbu whom she nursed; but when the devils saw this child getting the milk that had been denied them they were jealous and they took counsel and killed the child. Their incest was betrayed by the dog who guarded the door. When the parents were shamed and the child killed they buried the child in the black rock on the right of the Talung valley, which can be seen to this day, and thereafter in disgust they divided their property and separated. Komsi*thing* went to Tibet and he took with him all the riches and jewels and animals which the Tibetans have till this day. Narzong-*nyou* turned towards our country but she was careless and that is why our country is so poor.

'After that Komsi*thing* summoned all the devils to him and all came except Doam *moong* who is the devil of leprosy, and he counselled the devils and said to them "You are devils and you must act according to your nature; but you must take an oath that when men are born you will accept them if they give you pigs and oxen and rice and other things to eat; if you are looked after you must go away, you must obey the Mun and Padem and the sacrificer". They all took this oath except Doam *moong* who was not present and that is the reason why you can never drive him away and leprosy cannot be cured.

'But still there was no Mun; Itpomu had placed all the devils in the big plain Azum Patham; but there they had nothing to eat. So then Itpomu created the Mun spirit and sent her to feed them. When the Mun arrived at Azum Patham she said to the devils "You are older than I am and I am helpless; I will return to Itpomu". But the devils begged her to stay, saying that if she went away they would always be hungry; if she stayed they would promise to obey her. They swore this by three great oaths; first they cut their finger nails and swore on them: then they spat on the Kashou tree and the tree withered, finally they spat in the sea and the sea dried up. Since that time the Mun must find out what sacrifices are needed and give them to the devils and the devils will always obey them.'

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The other important story for which *loong* has to be obtained before it can be publicly repeated is the story of the *Origin of Marriage*. With its internal repetitions and lists of names it takes between two and three hours to repeat; it is always repeated

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY II

The model of Mamoo *moong* with the '*deu*'—the nine-storeyed devil's palace made out of coloured threads—in position down by the *chotes* just before the worship begins. In the foreground are Katel and Jiroong. Behind, Chala Mandal and Lumba.

[facing p. 224]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer
539 on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat
581 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for
[881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities
776 Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told 841 in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; 539 it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingtong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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756 each household. There are however a few ceremonies when a Mun sacrifices and prophesies for the whole community; but all that I have seen or heard of are adjuncts to lamaist ceremonies.

756 In the Cherim ceremony which is held twice yearly, once at the
796 beginning of the rains, and again at the beginning of winter, to keep off illness from the community, three separate rituals are performed, two by Mun, and the third by lamas. The communal nature of these sacrifices is emphasized and at least one individual from each household has to be present, and each household contributes a little of the grain. So that the Mun can participate the ceremony is held on neutral ground, when I saw it on March 28th., by the *choten* below the monastery and just outside the sacred precincts.

The first part of the ceremony consists of an offering to the devils: this ceremony is called *rum* after the name given to the chief article of sacrifice. This is a large basket filled with earth and covered with a banana leaf into which are inserted a number of varied articles with eight[11] of each sort of article: 'devil's walking-sticks' consisting of decorated bamboos with flowers inserted in holes, containers of water, milk, tea and *chi*, pieces of mica, stems of wormwood decorated with threads, fresh eggs, heaps of grain, and dried bird, dried fish and ginger. There are also offered two *ta-ming* which consist of long sticks to which are attached wrapped in leaves samples of every sort of food and drink. When the offerings have been made the Mun, sitting opposite them, intones a long chant
[787] to invoke the gods, and then takes the eggs and holds them to his forehead while he shuts his eyes and concentrates; the line which he envisages inside the eggs foretells the future health of the community. In the spring of 1937 Gongyop saw 'a fairly straight path' which signifies that there will be a mild epidemic of stomach trouble. Four years ago, when there was a bad epidemic of dysentery he saw 'a curved, almost spiral path, with a knot at the end of it.'

The second ceremony, also performed by Mun, consists of offerings to the Gods of Kinchenjunga and the Plains, and is called Tsandong. The offerings consist of rice, butter, *chimi*, a rupee and eggs. The sacrifice is in two parts; first grain and strained *chi* are thrown out by the Mun and her assistant (in March 1937 Pumri was assisted by old Kahlyeu) and later a goat is dedicated and then killed.

[11] It may be noted that for Mun and lama odd numbers are lucky, even unlucky.

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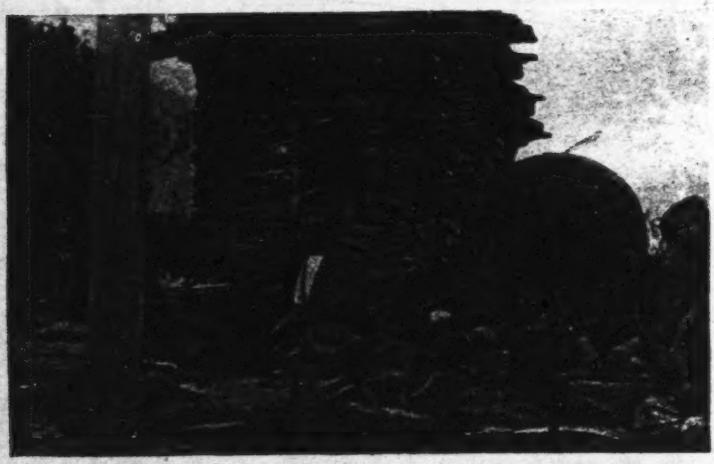

[534]

THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamco *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nahleut* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chazé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

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These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace' consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo. This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom; in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representation of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and readings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began; then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use); and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbutipkü* round her image were handed out for all to wave over themselves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar. It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in procession across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments, as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away.
On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the
796 Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun
waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The
783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth
[843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot
[585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relation to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

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performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the *ingzong* relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking. It is used in all ceremonies for which a blessing is invoked (as opposed to exorcisms), sometimes alone, sometimes with the *lafét*[12] sacrifice. It is always made privately in each household after the sowing of a field. It is the most solemn sacrament in Lepcha life. 756

When a Mun is called in to exorcise a devil the most usual situation is as follows. After the specific devil has been divined the Mun spends a night in his own home *munthen*-ing—that is summoning and communing with his possessing spirit—to discover the reason for that particular devil having attacked that particular person, and to learn what sacrifices or ritual are necessary to exorcise it. The question of causation is bound up with the conception of *tamtoom*—the necessary consequence of an earlier act; often this act was not committed by the sufferer, but by fairly remote ancestors. Thus the Mandal suffered from lumbago as the *tamtoom* of one of his ancestors having abandoned a baby in a field-house, where it was burnt to death. A complicating cause, which also accounted for his failure to produce a son, was that the spirit of his first dead wife was plaguing him because, although herself a Mun, she had been cremated and conducted to heaven by lamas (as though she were a nun) instead of being buried and led to a heaven by a Mun. Angered at this treatment her spirit had been transformed into Sabdok *moong* and in this guise came from the *rumlyang* from time to time to plague her husband and to prevent his having any sons. In this task she was assisted by the Hit *rum*, the Mun god who looks after the new-born dead.[13] 755 [753]

Such a *tamtoom* as this is almost impossible to lift but the Mandal did all in his power to persuade Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to lift the curse, making many sacrifices, and even summoning with many presents an old and widely famed Mun[14] from a village two days journey away. Before Gongyop started performing the

[12] See Chapter Two, p. 74.

[13] The Mun worship two supernaturals, Hit *rum* and Dé *rum*, who are considered to be ancestral gods who look after all dead Lepchas. Their positions and functions in the Mun eschatology will be more fully described in Chapter Thirteen.

[14] This man, besides being a Mun, was also a Pau and Yaba. Gongyop, who assisted in the sacrifice, said that he had heard he was a 'black' Mun—Mun-mook Mun—, but he was not able to form any opinion from the prayers he heard him say.

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755 more customary part of the invocation he told me this story of the reasons of the dead wife's anger with, for him, considerable gusto; it is possibly rather comforting to know that the neglect of the religion of which you are the priest is the cause for such elaborate ceremonies.

When the Mun has discovered as much as possible about the supernatural and immediate causes of the illness he indicates the necessary objects of sacrifice. These are almost always animals, but on occasion other objects are needed as well or instead. Sometimes these objects are valuables, which are just displayed to gratify the supernatural; sometimes other edibles—crops, *chi*, dried bird, dried fish, ginger. According to the ceremony these are either abandoned to be eaten by wild animals, or consumed, as part of the ritual, by all present except the Mun himself.

When animals are sacrificed they are first offered alive to all the supernaturals, including those specially involved; then they are slaughtered by some layman and divided up. Parts of the intestines —the lungs, liver and heart—called the *sha-fot* are singed or cooked with rice and chopped up and thrown to the devils, and the head, one fore-leg, and one hind-leg (these portions are called *gazook*) are laid out and dedicated to the devil specially involved. After the dedication the meat is eaten; it is often the Mun's fee but he does not always take it all. The Mun intones prayers both before and after the animal is killed; the praying may take four hours, and is usually not attended to by the other people present. In daylight ceremonies, when the weather is fine, the Mun often withdraws a little distance from the house in order to pray without disturbing or disturbance.

This relatively simple sacrifice is usually performed when there is a parallel exorcism being performed at the same time by lamas; for some other devils, particularly those with which lamas cannot deal in any way, much more elaborate ceremonies are necessary. It is impossible to generalise about these exorcisms as one can about the lamaist ones, for they have no apparent common principle. I have therefore selected three 'prescriptions' out of the considerable number I have witnessed or heard about, as samples; in their different aspects they embody the greater number of motives in elaborate Mun ritual.

(1) *To get rid of Sor moong* (*violent death*) *or Apang moong* (*genito-urinary diseases*). A goat is tethered by a long rope which has three knots tied in its length; first of all, all the members of the

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afflicted household must touch the knots and then the Mun; then the Mun will call on all the devils to be contented with the blood of the sacrifice and not to take the patient, after which he throws the rope into the air; if the rope falls end outwards (i.e. the end away from the goat falls towards the door) it means the devils will be satisfied; if it falls towards the house the prognosis is bad. After this the animal is killed and the *gaqook* and *sha-fot* offered to the devil with a plate and a pot filled with rice, a rupee and a ceremonial scarf, together with some of the invalid's ornaments and clothing (these last are only offered symbolically) and also a cup of *chi* with different grains in it. Then the Mun constructs a phallus out of wood, which is called in its guardian function *moong long tik*; this is set up between two stones leaning slightly forward, somewhere in the forest, and anointed with the blood of the slain animal and *chi*; this will keep the devil away, for no devil can pass this guardian.

(2) *To drive away the ghost of a dead child, called Num-een moong, which kills young children by infantile diarrhoea.* After an animal has been sacrificed the person who is troubled by the *moong* goes down to a narrow stream; the troubled person stands on the right of the stream and the Mun on the left of it. Then a 'gateway' is made over the stream of two bundles of elephant grass and brambles; and the Mun holds in each hand a bundle made out of wild raspberries, nettles and all other thorny and prickly plants. These bundles are dipped in water and *pék* over the sufferer several times; then a bamboo *chi* holder filled with blood and *chi* and shut up at both ends, and a leaf filled with fried rice and meat and blood are *pék* over the patient and thrown through the gateway for the devil; then the bunches of thorny plants are thrown through the gateway and finally the gateway is filled up with thorny plants 'so that it looks like a tree'. The Mun does this at two other places some way apart on the stream; he must do these second two—one above and one below the original one—alone, and after completing them he must return straight to his own house without meeting anybody; should he meet people Num-een *moong* will start haunting them.

Num-een *moong* is the devil released by the death of young children under the age of about ten; this devil pursues living people and especially other children; older people who die do not let loose a devil. The Num-een *moong* persists for about three years after the child's death; when there are bad storms the devil can be heard hooting 'Oo-oo-oo.' Children are particularly

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755 frightened of this devil and a great number of Lepchas claim to have heard it cry.

755 (3) *To get rid of Chyom moong (that is the devil who causes people to die by falling from a tree or cliff) or Rot moong (that is the*
762 *devil who causes people to commit suicide).* This ceremony is called Moong Sot, killing the devil, and should be performed by the surviving members of the family in which one member has either died violently or committed suicide. It *should* be performed every three years, but it is sufficient if the ceremony is done after the violent death and at the birth of each new member of the household. If the ceremony is not performed the devil will return and claim another victim.

A dead goat is skinned except for its legs below the joint and is lain on its back with its hind quarters towards the bowman. Beside it is a hole already dug and above it is made a small shelter of bamboos thatched with reeds. Beyond that is set up a red head of banana flower stuck into the ground and against it a post on top of which is attached the goat's heart, in such a way that the blood drips on the banana flower. In a line with this stands a bowman with an arrow in his bow ready to shoot. The Mun is at one side not looking at the post. The other men who are present are all armed with knives.

After a time the Mun starts shivering uncontrollably and summons the devil in a loud voice. As he calls some insect or other will climb up the pole towards the heart, and the bowman must shoot it with his arrow before it reaches it. As soon as he has shot he must call to the Mun to say whether he has hit or missed the insect; if he has missed the Mun must recall it. When the insect is killed it and the goat are chopped to pieces by the bystanders with their knives and buried in the prepared hole; stones and earth are rammed on top of the sacrifice to fill up the hole, and then a second time to make a little mound.

Padem can offer *sakyou faat* and can generally perform some of the simpler exorcisms; there is no general limitation of their power to deal with different devils; it depends entirely on their individual knowledge and capacity. On the whole Padem cannot deal with the more dangerous devils, nor sacrifice animals more important than a chicken or, in a few instances, a goat. The most general form of offering for Padem is the *rum*—the basket filled with various containers. Yaba and Pau, as has been said, can make no sacrifices but can only indicate what sacrifices other priests should make.

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CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

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241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

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survive the arduous journey to Mayel from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayel have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people, Adoo Yook and Alau Yook, have in a way as wives the two sisters called Talyeu Nimu and Sangvo Nimu, who are the spirits of the earth; these two women lie on their backs under the earth and on their bellies are the cultivatable lands; into this Adoo Yook and Alau Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as if it were human seed from a husband, and the women are fertilised and fruitful.

In the old days the path to Mayel was open and sometimes the people of Mayel used to come into the other parts of the world and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayel country. Thus the people of Mayel helped to build the palace of Fyung Di near Pemionchi where the Kings of Sikkim lived before the war against the Nepali. While they were building the palace they ate and talked like ordinary people; but when, after its completion, people were accompanying them home, the people of Mayel walked and talked with them as far as a certain mountain and then disappeared in a clap of thunder. Old people also say that in the spring the people of Mayel go into Tibet, either to Lhassa, or to Yambo Zikchu, where they sell pumpkins and cucumbers and egg-plants and chillies. When the Maharajah was living at Chumbi some old Lepchas accompanied him there and saw the people of Mayel selling these plants; the rest of the suite being Sikkimese and Tibetans did not recognise them but the Lepchas naturally did so immediately; as soon as they were recognised the people of Mayel disappeared; as it was nobody knew whence they came or whither they were going.

About six generations ago two people found their way into the Mayel country. One of these was Jiroong's ancestor who was hunting and went past Sakhyong and over two distant peaks; there he saw floating in a stream a branch of a certain sort of tree which he realised must have been thrown there by the people of Mayel and he followed the stream up. He reached a path as narrow as a razor edge on which were the feathers of the Mayel birds which had died on the return journey. After passing this ridge the hunter followed the road for three days round the mountain and came to the village of Mayel and there saw seven houses and asked for shelter for the night. They had big pigs lying down and they killed a pig and gave him pork to eat and rice and *chi*. The hunter

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776 stayed there seven days and when he went away the people of Mayel asked him not to talk about them when he returned; and they gave him as gifts rice seed which he sowed and the fruit of pumpkin and cucumber which turned into stone.

Another hunter from Sakhyong also found his way there but he was not so fortunate. When he came to the village he found a child and asked him 'Who are your father and mother?' The child said 'We are our own fathers and mothers, we are babies and young people and old people'. The man then picked and cooked some rice. When the people came near he threatened them with his knife. At this they said to him 'Do not do that; cook and eat your rice and go away. If you do not we will drive you away with our dogs'. When they said that he looked round and saw huge dogs like bears with enormous eyes. Then he was very frightened and ran away at once with some of the cooked rice in his hand. As he ran home there was a terrific thunderstorm, and he was pelted with snow and hail. Since the time of these adventurous travellers the road has been closed with an enormous rock.

ii

241 The people of Mayel are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of dry rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long lists of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in those houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops, and, after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered *sakyou faat* to ensure a good harvest. Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayel; the others come from different supernaturals. Barley, wheat, buckwheat and wet rice come from Kongsen-bu, the God of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said[2] comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-*nyou*, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayel are said to share this dislike, and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the

[2] See Chapter Three, p. 92.

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people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies —or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafèt* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafèt* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafèt* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafèt*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

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selves will give a small present to the Mun who will sing for all of them. The grain which is used in this sacrifice has to be specially ripened in the sun in the same way as the grain for seed is ripened. This completes the ceremony of sowing and it is always followed by a feast in which meat is eaten.

The ceremony of harvesting is far more complicated. It is only employed for the dry rice. When the dry rice is ripe a little is picked to be prepared for *chi* and when the *chi* is ready the owner of the field summons all his friends and they go together to pick rice. Until the ceremony is completed nobody, not even children, may pick any grain or he would get ill; if anybody gets stomach-ache at that period people will say that he has picked rice before it was harvested.

[753]

It is necessary to have ready beforehand the smoke-dried *tafoot* of a pig. The *tafoot* would seem to be the gall-bladder or spleen; it is round and has a white smelly liquid inside and is found near the bladder, but in pigs and musk deer it is said to be found near the penis at the end. On the day of reaping this *tafoot* is taken up to the field of dry rice together with two burning brands from the house-fire and also a *patyoot* of *chi* made from the new rice. When the party arrives, a place in the centre of the field is chosen as the *ʒo-lam* (the place where the crops are heaped); some rice-plants in the centre of the *ʒo-lam* are tied together into a sheaf and then the two burning brands will be held above them and on these a piece of the *tafoot* will be put. Then an old and experienced man—not the owner of the field but any one of his workers—will be chosen to represent a man of Mayel (called for the ceremony Mayel-mu) and he will blow on the *tafoot* and speak; while this is done a special measuring basket is held upside down over the brand. The old man will summon the gods and the ancestors and will say 'Come and see the smoke; burr—burr—burr—burr'. Then all the people present will repeat, 'burr—burr—burr'. By this invocation it is hoped that the gods will come and bring back all the grain eaten by wild birds and animals.

Standing by the speaker is a woman not directly connected with the field owner, who has been chosen for the day to represent Talyeu-mu, one of the earth sisters. When Mayel-mu has finished his invocation the measuring basket is put on his back and Talyeu-mu cuts the tied grain and puts it in the basket. Then Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu, who acts as her load carrier, go round the *ʒo-lam* cutting a basket of rice for Talyeu-mu; at the same time

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the others cut two baskets of rice for the people of Mayel. When the three baskets have been cut four or five reed mats are put down on the flattened ground and all dance on the rice to separate the grain from the chaff. All the dances are round dances and semi-acrobatic, consisting chiefly of hopping and jumping; nine different types are recognised and three rounds of each type are danced in turn. After the dancing Talyeu-mu goes round the edge of the field cutting another basket while all the other reapers work in a row to fill two more baskets which are heaped up like the first; after these have been put on the *ʒo-lam* the *nam-toak* (potential curse) is lifted and all can cut as they like; but during the whole day Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu cut apart from the others. When the second heap of rice has been poured on to the *ʒo-lam* a fence is erected to the south of it consisting of three leafy saplings joined by a bamboo; on it a mat is hung and then from the three posts are fastened three bundles of rice-plants, ears downwards, hanging over the mat. After this fence is set up the *patyoot* of new *chi* is placed against it and Mayel-mu offers it with an invocation. Then at the four corners of the *ʒo-lam* are erected four posts of a sort of reed or bamboo; the top part is split into three and the two side pieces are bent down to make loops.

When the *ʒo-lam* has been completed all do as they like; some gather rice, some dance, some drink *chi* and so on. The harvesting must be completed before the sun has touched the hills; if all is not cut by then the work must go on the next day and the people must spend the night on the harvest field, as will be explained lower down. Right at the end must be gathered another three baskets of rice which must be completed at the same time; these three baskets are all emptied at the same time to the east of the heap and all present cry 'burr, burr, burr'. The rice is now put in eight heaps; that of the morning is put in the centre where the house-mother works; that of Talyeu-mu to the east and the other six heaps in a semi-circle to the north; these six heaps are named after six big mountains in the neighbourhood. Then the rice is separated from the chaff and straw partially by hand and partially by dancing; all work together at the different heaps except the house-mother and Talyeu-mu who work theirs by themselves. When all the rice is sifted the house-mother and Talyeu-mu push the heap of Talyeu-mu to the centre heap saying 'May the heap support us firmly and be as the sea'. After that all the other heaps are pushed into the centre, one after the other in due order. Then a wreath of rice

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241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of
782 charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can
786 drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *ʒo-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafēt* is offered with the new
782 *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

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look at grain drying in the sun. Until that time grain must be dried over the fire; for if the gods of Mayel saw grain drying in the sun before they had been offered any they would be angry and would not come the next year and there would be a bad harvest. Until everybody has made the sacrifice people who go where they may see rice drying in the sun—across the river or to Mangan or Gangtok—must cover their face with a cloth. If a man who has not made his sacrifice were ordered by the Mandal to go abroad where he might see rice being dried, he would have a valid excuse for not going and a substitute would have to be found for him. Should a man by any chance see crops drying he would be considered to have *amik-her*, which is almost the evil eye; if a man with *amik-her* were to look on a field the people of Mayel would be terrified as if by an enemy and would run away and would not return next year. Therefore a man who has accidentally seen drying crops would live in the jungle or in a field-house or cardamum field until the rice of the neighbourhood was gathered; if he should be a person who would normally sacrifice he would not do so that year. To avoid this danger Lepchas who have to go to Mangan at the harvesting season only go at night so that they will see no drying crops. For a man with *amik-her* to look at the harvest would be *nam-toak*—a year of disaster—as bad as if incest had been committed. When people have performed their sacrifices they send and tell the Mandal who then sends the *gyapõn* round with the message that now all have sacrificed and crops can be dried in the sun. All the inhabitants of Lingthem, Panung, Liklyang and Salim have to wait till they get the message before they can expose crops. Should anybody expose his crops before all were ready the Mandal would fine him Rs. 15; but such a case has not occurred in the last twenty years, though some are known of earlier. Besides dry rice, maize and three varieties of millet cannot be exposed to the sun. This prohibition does not apply to the other sorts of millets nor to barley, buckwheat, and wet rice. Grains must also not be exposed until a sort of wild grass which grows on the far side of the Talung river has turned yellow.

The Lepchas of Zongu are very serious about this prohibition on seeing drying crops in the sun; it is a custom which has descended from the ancestors of our ancestors. 'The people outside Zongu say they don't care; "the grain is in the sun when it is on the stalk; what is the difference when it is cut?" they say; but we people in Zongu have always acted in this way.' For Lepchas

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24 784 living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

24 The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

iii

224 782 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

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the hunter crouching behind and speaking very slowly and softly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken that no woman sees the animal's head; if she did the hunter would have no success in future.

To know how to sacrifice to Pong *rum* it is necessary to learn how to, and to receive *loong*; for this purpose the novice goes to anybody who knows—maybe his father or some other relation or a friend—taking with him *chi* and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee. Great care must be taken that no woman is present at this time. When the older man sees the gifts he enquires what they are for and is told it is to learn how to sacrifice. The older man then arranges the sacrifice and tells the neophyte to sit with his back to him: he must not look but must listen most attentively. After that the neophyte on the next suitable occasion will make the sacrifice; the instructor will be near him and if he makes a mistake will nudge him, whereat the sacrifice must be stopped short. Subsequently the neophyte will take another lesson, continuing until he is word perfect and has received his *loong* and can sacrifice on his own.

A person who has once been to the communal sacrifice to Pong *rum* should continue to do so all his life; he may, however, give it up, in which case he is liable to be troubled with poltergeist manifestations by Pong *rum*, who anyhow if he is displeased with a hunter will pursue him whistling, and the thump of heavy stones falling will be heard, though no stones are seen to fall. It is even preferable for hunters' children to continue the ritual.

Kurma used to hunt but does so no longer and has given up going to the sacrifice to Pong *rum*; for he is afraid that should he go and then not hunt he would become mad. As things are he is somewhat persecuted by Pong *rum*; he describes these persecutions with the greatest detail and indifference. He says quite freely that he does not care a bit.

Near his house is an orange tree and some time ago on a moonlight night he heard distinctly the sound of big stones being thrown under this tree; but there was nothing to be seen so he knew it was Pong *rum*; he therefore returned to the house, lit some incense leaves and butter and came out and offered it to the god saying 'Please forgive us; we have no intention of hunting'.

'Only a month ago when some friends were in my house with me drinking *chi* I heard my dog which was tethered some way

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224 782 from the house barking furiously; I went outside expecting that somebody was passing but I could see no-one. When I returned to the house we heard the dog whimper and then stop; we went outside and found its dead body in front of the house. Of course Pong *rum* had killed it, but I do not care: I just offered the gods some incense.'

Kurma's younger brother used to hunt but never learnt how to make the sacrifice properly; Kurma used to do it for him. But on one occasion when he was away, his maternal uncle sacrificed and instead of making the offering to Pong *rum* made it to his own god. This is one of the reasons given for this young man's subsequent violent death in the forest.[4]

Kurma's family are now very unlucky hunters and the reason is as follows. Three generations ago their forefather was a very lucky hunter who worshipped Shing *rum* (the wife of Pong *rum*). At that time the Mandal of the village was an unlucky hunter; he worshipped Pong *rum*. Now these two agreed to change gods. To do this they killed an ox and then drank three cups of *chi* mixed with the blood, with dabs of butter on the side, for this constitutes the most binding oath. From that day the descendants of the Mandal were always successful hunters while the descendants of the other man were always unlucky. Pong *rum* and Shing *rum* are naturally exclusively male gods.

Before drinking *chi* (in the case of lamas also before drinking tea) or eating food a little is offered to the gods. If the food is domestic in origin it is thrown away from the eater, if of wild origin towards the eater, that is backwards. These offerings are tiny and quite automatic; the 'straw' is lifted from the *chi* and flicked outwards; a few crumbs are dropped from the first handful. No form of prayer accompanies these offerings.

[4] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 402–403.

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BOOK TWO

Life of the Lepchas

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CHAPTER TEN

THE RHYTHM OF LEPCHA LIFE

i

000 Those travellers who mention the Lepchas in their accounts of their journeys in Sikkim and Tibet refer to them with startling unanimity as 'fairies' or 'elves' or 'woodland folk', according to the fantasy and self-consciousness of the different writers. The Europeans in British India who have had more prolonged contact with them stress as their chief qualities their mildness and truthfulness.

If one accepts Dr. Margaret Murray's account of the Fairies[1] as the original inhabitants of England who after the invasions of various conquering races lived in very hidden places and who were extremely timid in their contacts with the conquerors, the comparison of the Lepchas with the Fairies is extremely apt. The Lepchas who still retain a more or less integrated culture do live in relatively hidden and inaccessible places; they are remarkable climbers and walkers, they know the forest and its produce far better than any of their neighbours, and it is quite possible that they may appear in places where there is no visible path. They are pathologically 609 shy of strangers; a foreigner passing through their villages, were he to notice the scattered and inconspicuous houses, might well think them deserted. The first few days in Lingthem we scarcely saw a soul; walking about the village we saw only shut and smokeless houses, with a very occasional dodderer or infant. The majority of the inhabitants had simply taken to the forest.

123 After a time this timidity wore off. I insisted that all goods bought locally should be paid for without bargaining, so that they should not fear requisitions; if too high a price was asked the goods were to be refused. I stated that I had got medicines and could cure certain sores and diseases, and after a couple of bold people

[1] *The God of the Witches*, by Dr. Margaret A. Murray. London Sampson Low n.d.

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123 had been successfully treated a great number of people came for medicines and stayed to talk. People who came for their own reasons were given betel nut, cigarettes and sweet tea; those who came at my request and who stayed a long time were paid at the same rate as they would have been for a day's coolie work (eight annas); when I found their information particularly interesting I gave something extra as well. As far as possible I avoided the system of direct question and answer; nearly always some topic would arise naturally and I would let the speaker develop it as he wished; at other times I would suggest a topic. Only when a certain rapport was established did I start cross-questioning. The greater part of the conversations took place in the monastery enclosure, where there were a number of convenient outcrops of rock for sitting on; but some of the most valuable information was obtained casually on walks or through over-hearing conversations.

Once they got used to the shock of my arrival my presence did not, as far as I am able to judge, affect their actions or behaviour in any way, except possibly for an occasional affectation of modesty on the part of the women. At first nursing mothers used to cover their breasts in my presence, but after a few weeks they no longer bothered to do so. In so far as Lepchas divide humanity into 'inside our group' and 'outside our group' they placed me after trial in the former category. This is not to claim that they accepted me 'as one of themselves'; they certainly never did so; but they did not regard me as a dangerous stranger. I think they regarded me in three lights: as a dispenser of good medicine and other useful or pleasant articles; as an eccentric who asked questions to which everybody knew the answer, who paid for conversation, who made silly jokes in bad Lepcha, and—most peculiar of all—talked to and played with children; and finally, owing to the colour of my skin and the messages sent from Gangtok, as an honoured guest and, in a way, as a representative of the Maharajah. In this last aspect I was a slight nuisance; if we visited a house a special seat in the *dé-ong* was always prepared and *chi* served in the best container; a certain amount of deference and formality always marked the beginning of such visits. But although they were deferential they were never servile; nothing was done, as far as I could tell, with the intention of ingratiating themselves with me. If I wanted to speak to a person and that person was busy a message would be sent to that effect; if I wanted to be present at anything at which it was the custom that strangers should not be present

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) 123
or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised [152] me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a [515] different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you 431
go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *asék* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the 431
Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving 123
more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

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431 practically the only present I could give was money, which is not of very great use to them. I had frequent tussles with them on the 123 subject of payment for medical services; I insisted that medicine should not be paid for; they considered that it was shameful to take something for nothing and I frequently had to bully people with bad sores, which I knew I could cure easily, to come up for treatment; they were unwilling to do so because they thought they had nothing suitable to give as presents, and they were ashamed to take something for nothing. An interesting sidelight on their attitude towards gift-giving and strangers is shown by the behaviour of two of the bigger households who on my first arrival refused to sell to the servants either eggs or milk; and later when they got to know us used to come with presents of these commodities for which they refused to accept any return payment except after long argument.

123 When the Lepchas got to know me well they were not at all shy of asking for things; but except for cigarettes, betel nut and iodine or dressings for small cuts they always offered something in return for whatever they asked for and were in no way offended if their requests were refused. They were particularly attracted by illustrated papers and asked frequently to be given them; to a certain extent they recognised very clearly the objects portrayed in drawings and photographs, though their explanations to one another of the situations depicted were, as might well be imagined, very peculiar. I got far more amusement out of hearing three Lepchas explaining to one another what the pictures in *Punch* were about than I ever got out of reading that paper. One or two people asked for [726] pictures of special subjects; Rigya kept on asking for pictures of war because 'he was amazed at them and had never seen or thought of anything like it'; Chudo liked pictures of cars and fashionable life, for he had spent nearly a year in Gangtok as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchens and knew about the lives of Europeans and was able to explain them to his less fortunate compatriots. For him European life consisted chiefly in extremely formal and uncomfortable meals at which there was never enough to eat, interspersed with quarrels of an extremely dramatic nature. In one of the numbers of the *Illustrated London News* there were several reproductions of Chinese Buddhist frescoes and there was quite a competition to possess these among the older and more pious lamas. After I had had some photos enlarged and had shown people their photos I was bombarded with requests for photos of individuals

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and groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes and stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be shot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking through the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses; people would return again and again with their friends with demands to look through these wonderful appliances. 123

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers to amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers in an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking at them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at them and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made them grow' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow', or else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say 'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them; but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four 867 123 431

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867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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to be paid or received; one or two friends may come in to drink *chi* and everybody will sit around and gossip, or perhaps one will tell one of the long stories which take several evenings to repeat. The younger children can listen to the conversation if they wish to; if not they can go and amuse themselves; very little notice is taken of them, and, except possibly for malicious gossip, no subject is avoided because of their presence. A few people own oil lamps, but for the majority the only illumination is the wood-fire. A couple of hours after the evening meal the bedding is brought out of the boxes where it is stored during the day and laid out with the more or less padded wooden pillows at the appropriate places round the walls. People sleep on a cloth, generally quilted, and have another blanket as covering; Lepchas never sleep with their heads under the bedclothes as they think they would then suffocate.

When the bedding is laid out the fire is damped down with ashes and darkness is presumed to reign; people undress more or less, according to their personal habits (most adults remove their outer clothes and sleep in their drawers, but some, especially poorer people who have not sufficient coverings, retain the formerly general habit of sleeping naked near the fire) and settle down in their proper sleeping places for the night. Everybody has his own mattress, but married couples share pillows and blankets. The smallest infants sleep in their mother's arms; but as soon as they are big enough they are given their own bedding, for fear they should wet their parents'. Occasionally a child is placed between husband and wife, but more usually on the far side of the wife. An only or youngest child may sleep beside its parents until it is ten or eleven, but if a younger sibling is born it is placed to sleep either with an elder sibling or some older relation, often a widowed aunt or grandmother. A child usually sleeps in an elder person's arms till about the age of eight, after which, except in the very poorest familes, it usually gets its own bedding; but until marriage unmarried siblings of the same sex usually have their beds laid side by side. Children must always respect their grandparents' bedding, and in the day-time the place where it is laid; and adults must respect the bedding and sleeping-places of their parents-in-law.

Once the fire is damped down and the bedding laid out people are presumed to be invisible and inaudible; but this is merely a social convention, and people can and do tell in the greatest detail just what goes on in the night. Occasionally a young man may wait till everybody else is asleep, and then creep out on hands and knees

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512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for [461] the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asék*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

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MONASTERY FEAST

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527 with boiling water for *chi* or tea, one with cereal and one with meat, if there is meat. Overlooking these pots to the east of the monastery will be old Dunbi, who has got a sort of honorary post as monastery cook; he does not do very much and the position is more or less of a sinecure invented to give this lazy and incompetent man a feeling of importance and to provide food, which will be given as payment for his services, for his wife and children. Usually the wives of the givers of the feast supervise the cooking, giving out the materials and so on; but everybody lends a hand as he feels disposed. Sitting about on the grass and stones outside are a number of the younger men and women and elder boys; they chat and joke and pass indecent remarks and occasionally lend a hand at fetching firewood or water, or bamboos to be cut up into *patyoot*. The younger boys from about the age of eight to fourteen hang about with these elders when they are not doing chores for their parents or the feast-givers; they mostly sit fairly quietly, but occasionally they go on to the hill outside the monastery precincts and run about playing catch with flowers of daphne or chasing the hens or imitating bird calls. They are used as messengers a great deal if the parents have left anything behind; they are in the feast but are on the fringe of it. The girls are more inclined to tag along with their parents, or with an elder sister; many of them are carrying younger siblings, though they often hand over these burdens to their brothers. Almost all the time everybody is eating and drinking.

The lamas and possibly the feast-givers arrive the evening before; the lamas to make the decorations for the altar and the feast-givers to stack the provisions in the porch. Most of the night and almost continuously from dawn the lamas have been reading their books and playing their musical instruments; from the moment they arrive they start drinking *chi* and eating and the *patyoot* in front of them are continually filled. The crowd starts arriving in driblets at about eight o'clock, each person bringing some contribution to the feast; some people arrive later and the full concourse will not be present till nearly midday. Some of the more pious people on their arrival circumambulate the monastery three times, always keeping the wall on the right, and turn the prayer wheels; they may go into the monastery room and prostrate themselves three times before the images. As soon as they are settled each person is provided with a *patyoot* of *chi* which they take and sit down and drink; a small *patyoot* with several 'straws' in it will be provided for the toddlers of three or four, and set firmly on

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527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273 cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862] hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink 262 on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302] intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273] usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
fields.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 842 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

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where he was going to pray: the table with the cup filled with strained *chi* and the incense burner already lit was in front of him; the Mandal was seated beside him, with his wives opposite; everything was ready for the ceremony to begin. Before praying the Mun made an, as it were, introductory speech, addressed partly to the Mandal, and partly to the other people present.

The Mun: I'm a very old man, and I found the journey very trying indeed; I was tired and felt I'd like to rest, and —— a girl. I'm really a very old man now; but since you're the Mandal, and this is your house I shall do what I can. When you first sent a messenger with a load of *chi* I said 'No, I cannot go'. But you sent twice and three times and I couldn't resist you. It is true that in rank as Mandal you are above me; but in age you could be my grandson. Just as a small girl is frightened when she sees a big penis and runs away, or as a little boy is frightened when he sees a big vulva, so am I frightened of you. Nevertheless I shall do what I can. I am very sorry for you because although you have had four wives you have got no son. I think this is a source of great worry to you, but what can be done? It is not your fault; you have treated your wives well. It is not a bad deed but misfortune which makes you childless. Were I to say I could do nothing for you, you would be disappointed; shall I do this ceremony and nothing result I shall be ashamed. Nevertheless I will do what I can. You—his wives—you are my sisters and daughters: tell me, my daughters, does this husband of yours treat you badly?

The Mandal: My parents-in-law are very strict with me, and were I to do so they would punish me.

Tafoor: And then you'd take it out of your wives—or put it in —very roughly. (*General laughter*)

The Mandal (while the Mun smears butter on the cup): When I was ill it was discovered that Sabdok *moong* was troubling me, and Hit *rum* was angry, so I sent for you, because you are an old and experienced man. So please be so kind as to sacrifice properly, so that I may be troubled no longer. Please do so, whether my body is cured thereby or not.

The Mun: Were you to die, what would happen to your wives and daughter—women who are all alone?

The Mandal: Don't worry about that; in that case they can go home.

The Mun: I have already said that I am old and weak; if my sacrifice is unsuccessful, don't blame me. I take all you here to

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522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

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would count as incestuous. Another reason is the cultural concept that there is no temperamental difference between men and women; except that men are usually stronger physically identical standards of behaviour are expected from both sexes; the standards of beauty are identical; except that they may not kill animals nor perform lamaist ceremonies nor own land women suffer under no disability because they are women. With this general conception of the similarity of the two sexes the differences of appearance and function of the primary sexual characteristics becomes even more striking and worthy of comment; and it is worth noting again in this context the extraordinary amount of fantasy about the independent life of the genitalia which occurs in the Lepcha stories. It is also possible that in removing all intense emotion from sexual activity the Lepchas have also destroyed some of the emotional release and psychological satisfaction.

Some of the young men were particularly given to obscenity, particularly Tobgé, a ne'er-do-well whose wife, it will be remembered, was carrying on with Dadool, and Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother. Chudo was twenty-nine, the father of three children, and very fond of his wife. He always gave the impression of being very much younger than his years; he was particularly sweet-tempered, even for a Lepcha, and very industrious, but he was extremely childish, perhaps because his elder brother, Tafoor, was so very learned and responsible. He had rather a grotesque sense of humour and was very fond of imitating lamaist dances, almost parodying them, and of making surprising jokes and unexpected little presents. When he learned I was fond of flowers he used to bring me nearly every day some orchid or other odd flower that he had found in his work travelling about the country-side. If the younger men were more inclined to obscenity so were the elder women, particularly Lumba's first wife, a Mun aged forty-seven, who was completely outrageous and shameless in her speech and behaviour; she was a jolly bawdy old creature, rather in the tradition of Marie Lloyd. As far as my information goes, and on such matters it is very extensive, she was relatively chaste in her private life; nobody repeated any scandal about her. When I talked to women about sex and childbirth and similar subjects the older ones used always to answer quite freely; but occasionally if there was a young woman in the group, she would ask why I talked about such things which made her feel ashamed; if this happened the older women would usually stop the conversation, giving

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831 522 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 522 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes, though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 537 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed, apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 537 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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WOMEN PREPARE FOOD

Chlaa Mandal's two wives winnow rice on the balcony of their house.

Mrs. Gongyop and Mrs. Chano join together to pound rice in the courtyard. Behind, a dog has got on to the balcony, where it has no right to be.

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[537] 195 large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison comes after'. [198] *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The [517] favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

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537 weeding, one person will tell (usually short) stories while the others work; sometimes there is one person appointed as story-teller for the day; that person will get special tit-bits at the evening meal. Only short stories are told at feasts, because there is too much noise and distraction for the necessary prolonged attention. Stories are also told on completely unformalised occasions; the sight of an uncommon bird or insect usually calls forth from somebody the story connected with this animal.

Lepcha stories are characterised by their vividness and by the number of internal repetitions. The Lepchas visualise extremely precisely and concretely; there are no half-tones in their stories; a thing or a person either is or is not present, and no attempt is made to fill the gap with guesses or conjectures. Although their stories are told extremely vividly, there is little tendency towards dramatisation for its own sake; changing of voice and mimicry of characters only occur in the humorous tales. Apart from the two sacred Mun stories there is no insistence on verbatim accuracy, provided all the points of the story are remembered.

Most of the older people have one or two long stories which are, as it were, their speciality; but there is no feeling of ownership in them and if another person can remember them he is at liberty to tell them. It is considered that to be able to recount a long story accurately it is necessary to listen to it attentively three times. Except for one or two of the animal fables the stories are never told to children; when they begin to learn sense and can sit quietly —that is when they are about ten—they are allowed to listen provided they don't interrupt. Some of the young boys know one or two short stories, and were very pleased to tell them to me, as unmarried youths do not easily get an audience.

It is not considered permissible to invent new fables or *lung-then* as they have a semi-scriptural value; the most that is allowed is a little individual embroidery or emphasis. Indeed I question whether stories are ever consciously invented; new ones are added to the repertoire through guests or visiting strangers.

Besides stories Lepchas are very fond of recounting anecdotes and events of their own past life or of their neighbours'; some of these anecdotes, such as the ordeal of the poisoners at Lungdeum[4] are half-way towards turning into stories, since they are told by people who were not themselves present. These anecdotes are told extremely precisely and concretely; when Lepchas describe

[4] See Book Three, Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

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626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable
154 to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of
[762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the
[673] word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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window with his back to us for a few minutes, before he went away looking quite different to his usual boisterous self. He did not return home till the evening. On another occasion Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged nineteen, came up to have a wound on his hand dressed, after which he went to the kitchen to have a cup of tea. A little later I sent and asked him to come and talk to me and he sent back a reply that he didn't want to. A couple of days later he returned to have his hand dressed again, and I then asked him why he thought I would give him medicine when he would not come and talk to me? He was almost dumb with embarrassed shame and tried to slink away; I had to employ a good deal of tact before I could get him to accept the medicine. Had I made such a remark in front of witnesses it is quite possible that he would have tried to take poison. 152

Considering the size of the community suicide is fairly frequent among the Lepchas. There have been six suicides in Lingthem and the neighbouring smaller villages in the last twenty years, and in every case the suicide has been immediately subsequent to a public reproof. In five out of the six cases the suicides were relatively young men; the sixth case was that of a young girl of Panung who drowned herself because her uncle and parents reproved her for her laziness and promiscuity. Chélé's father killed himself because his wife and her family publicly blamed him for neglecting her and his work while she was ill. Kurma's uncle killed himself because he was blamed for not keeping his wife in order, and Kurma's brother because he was blamed for his uncle's suicide.[5] The possibility of suicide from grief is admitted, but the only case I heard of was of a woman in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum who killed herself shortly after the death of her husband, and the details of this case were not properly known. Women kill themselves by drowning, men usually with the aconite poison they use on their arrows. 762

Besides the successful suicides there have been a number of suicide attempts which have been thwarted. It seems to me probable that a Lepcha can establish his innocence on a specific charge by going through the gestures of committing suicide in such situations that he is bound to be saved; some stories of attempted suicide which I heard seemed to me not to have been intended seriously; they were theatrical performances arranged in such a manner as to convince everybody of the sincerity of the libelled person without

[5] See Part Three for fuller details, Chapter Fifteen, p. 396–397.

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762 actually endangering his life.[6] One of the reasons for believing in the guilt of Hlatam the 'poisoner' was that both she and her son Aga must have been aware of what was said about them and neither had demonstrated their innocence by attempting to kill themselves.

Verbal threats of suicide are occasionally made, but they are taken little notice of. When they are drunk Dunbi, because he is poor, and Katel, because his second wife won't sleep with him, threaten to kill themselves. Children also occasionally threaten to kill themselves if they think they are unjustly scolded or ill-treated; when he was young Pembu, an exceptionally nervous man, used to make such threats, and Chano's younger son, who was brought up by an 'aunt' also does so occasionally; to such threats the parents retort that nobody wants such a naughty child.[7]

626 With this ever-present possibility of provoking shame and even suicide it can be seen that malicious gossip and scandal assume very considerable emotional importance. People are worried as to what their neighbours are saying about them behind their backs; one or two even said that the reason for having '*ingzong*' (special friends) in one's own village was so that if people spoke ill of you you would have somebody whom you can completely trust to tell you what is being said. My impression is that very little scandal is spoken, and that when people did discuss potentially scandalous or disagreeable situations they did so very seriously and with hushed voices, taking care that no children or ignorant neighbours should listen to what they were saying.

626 157 The potential influence of hostile talk has I think further results; it is a very strong sanction to encourage Lepchas to conform to the approved methods of behaviour; and it also makes people chary of expressing judgements about their neighbours. If you ask a Lepcha who in his village has any outstanding quality, whether good or bad, he will almost certainly reply that everybody is much of a muchness. In many ways I think this does represent the real Lepcha attitude; affection is based on mutual services, not on emotion, and consequently difference in character is of much less importance than difference of treatment. Only character traits strongly opposed to Lepcha ideals were spontaneously commented on, and those seldom; cruelty, avarice, untruthfulness,

[6] For an example of this see the story of the attempted suicide of Jiroong's sister in Chapter Sixteen, p. 428.

[7] See also the history of Chélé's threats of suicide; Chapter Six, pp. 164–165.

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

153 Numbers are practically meaningless to them and
802 numerical concepts play a very small rôle; in any question demanding numbers they will nearly always give in answer three or four alternatives. In some situations this is almost ludicrous; except for one or two lamas nobody knows his own age or even that of his youngest children in years; they all know the year they were born and what year they are now in, but if a child was born in Dog year they would be quite unable to work out its age today (1937 was Ox year and the child would be four) and they might just as well say that the child was two or eight. More than that, if you asked a person how many people were living in his house he would almost certainly get the number wrong; he could naturally recite immediately the names or rather the kinship terms of the people in his house; but it does not cross his mind to tot up the number and it is a mental operation of which nearly all Lepchas are incapable. The Lepchas count by twenties and use their fingers for all calculations; they count with the thumb against the fingers, putting the thumb on the base of the little finger for one, the first joint for two, the second joint for three, the tip for four and then going down to the base of the next finger for five and so on. There used to be long consultations to try and work out in how many days a fixed date for a calendrical feast would arrive; and on one occasion everybody except one lama arrived a day late, and the Muns frequently made a mistake of a day or more for their special festivals. They are quite incapable of working out what money they should receive for their cardamum; they may know that they have ten maunds and that each maund is worth Rs. 12; but unless they use sticks or some other memory guide they have absolutely no idea of what the total should be. The Mandal has to keep in his head the taxes due from each household but he does this by remembering the words and not the figures.

153 The Lepchas do not dramatise; and they do not alter their pace of thought or action except in emergencies which for the reason that they demand such alteration are considered particularly unpleasant. My impression is that the Lepchas think much more slowly than either the Nepali or the Indians, but since my knowledge of both these races is slight this impression is of little value; they certainly think quicker than the ordinary Somerset farm labourer, though infinitely slower than a European town dweller. I got the impression that they talked quickly, but that I think was due to the fact that the language was an unfamiliar one, and that I was straining to catch every shade of meaning.

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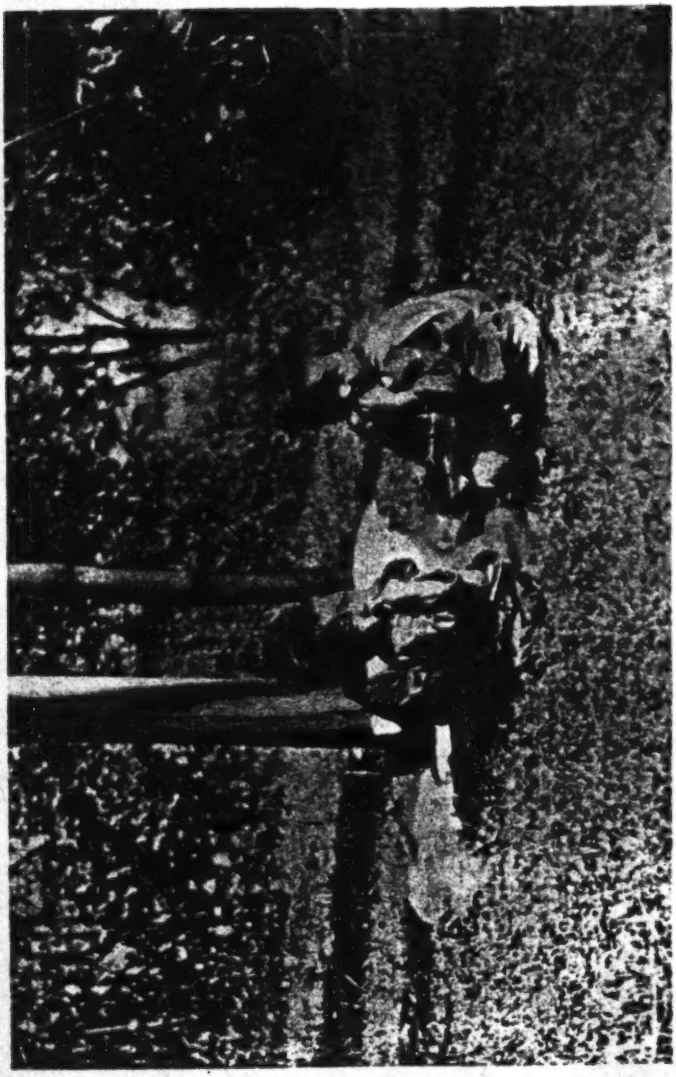

THE POT OF *CHI* FOR THE TODDLERS IS SET INTO THE GROUND WELL AWAY FROM THE GROWN-UPS

[facing p. 272]

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186 The Lepchas are remarkably tolerant. They are perfectly ready to admit the validity for other peoples of habits and customs which for them would be shocking or disgusting. For example the marriage arrangements of the Nepali, and some of the sexual habits of the Tibetans would be horrifying and disastrous if committed by Lepchas; the Lepchas know of these habits, and are inclined to laugh at them; but they do not reproach the Nepali or Tibetans for them, do not try and convince them that they are wrong, and do not fear moral contamination through contact with them. This tolerance is not accompanied however by any feelings of inferiority; the very strong sentiment of fundamental equality among individuals is carried over to a sentiment of fundamental equality between groups. Some people are richer, more industrious or cleverer than their neighbours; similarly the Tibetans are more learned and the Europeans richer than the Lepchas; but since the Lepchas are as learned and as rich as they can be, they do not, I think, feel any fundamental inferiority in comparison with more favoured groups, any more than they do in comparison with more favoured individuals. It is worth remembering in this connection how Gongyop in his prophetic dreams under the possession of Padem *rum* would visit the rulers of neighbouring states and Europeans and would be treated by them as an equal. It is noteworthy that the richer households and the learned lamas who can read do not, [554] except when the lamas are performing their special functions, demand or obtain any special preferential treatment.

[152] This tolerance of the Lepchas can be ascribed I think partly to contentment, and partly to indifference. Straightforward consumption—food, drink and sex—fills the forefront of their desires and aims in life; provided these physical needs are satisfied—and for the majority they are continuously satisfied—the other aspects of life are emotionally of less importance. In their dealings with the supernatural they are particularly tolerant and receptive; it is important to be able to deal with the devils but they have not any deep-set preference for one special method of dealing with them. Completely alien methods will be tried, and, if they prove satisfactory, adopted, however little they may be integrated into their general outlook; thus they have accepted the taboo on menstruating women in the treatment of cardamum, and retained the insistence on virginity in the sacrifices to the people of Mayel, though except in these instances virginity is a meaningless concept and menstruating women suffer under no disabilities. This capacity of accepting

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186 and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The 78| Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

157 Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

[578] This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

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832 pop-eyes or folded eyelids are ugly; so are dimples, too big or too
826 small a mouth, a protuberant bottom or big breasts. Particularly disliked is too big a head or a 'curved face', that is a face which in silhouette does not fall into one plane. White and even teeth and a pleasant smile are also desirable. Men and women are considered equal in beauty but a woman is considered to be at her most beautiful at the age of twelve, a man at the age of twenty. It is considered that on the whole a beautiful man will marry a beautiful woman and an ugly man an ugly woman, but this does not happen invariably; and the ugliness of a person is not considered to be a valid reason for refusing a marriage. A woman's beauty is considered to be somewhat spoilt by childbearing.

826 The differences in beauty of children are remarked but little importance is paid to childish beauty as it is considered essentially impermanent. A girl with a big head and eyes and body and feet is considered somewhat man-like and it is thought that she will work slowly in everything. A man with small features and particularly long eyelashes is considered to look like a woman; such a person will be a swift runner and a clever climber of trees and rocks, able to go where others cannot. Apart from these qualities the idea of temperament is not linked at all with physical appearance.

Freckles are considered disfiguring; they are the *tamtoom* of children who are not orphans eating bamboo shoots when the rice is ripe. 'Just as children have parents above them so rice has bamboo above it; consequently children who have no parents are not affected by this.' Black marks on the skin are caused by young people eating pig's stomach. There is no remedy for either of these disfigurements. On the whole beauty is not of much positive emotional importance; it is only when people are markedly unbeautiful that they are liable to be shunned. Beauty adds to the desirability of strangers as sexual partners; I do not think it is remarked at all in people with whom one is familiar. At the big monastery feasts I often asked people whom they considered to be the best-looking person present; when they did not produce an obscene joke as an answer they would usually refuse to pronounce judgement unless there was a stranger present, in which case the stranger was nearly always chosen. Good-quality and clean clothes and jewels add to the self-confidence of the wearer and to a certain extent enhance the wearer's beauty; but clothes and jewels could
832 never be a substitute for beauty. Nobody would think of borrowing
426 other people's clothes or jewels in order to appear finer and richer

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than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

832 426 562

viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

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88 Sexual experiment and adventure marriage
[882] and children follow in due course, but the Lepcha man is still grow-
885 ing up till about the age of thirty-six. At that period his responsibilities are liable to be heaviest; his parents will be retiring from the management of affairs, and he will have, if he is lucky, a number of young children to look after. As his sons grow up and become
888 capable adults in their turn he is able to withdraw somewhat from work; if he is intelligent he is a *yeum-bu*—a man who knows—and as such will be often asked for his advice by the Mandal and by his juniors. If he retains his health and prosperity as he grows older, and if his children and grand-children are still alive he acquires a sort of talismanic virtue; younger men will take valuable presents to so fortunate an old man in order to get in return either his drinking cup or his rosary and to share a meal of rice with him, in order to acquire the desirable qualities of this prosperous great-grandfather. But if an old man survives his children and loses his capacity to work his position is an unenviable one; he too, like the young child, consumes more than he produces; he is a nuisance, not respected or listened to, treated at best with casual deference. For the Lepchas the normal span of life is four score years; until that age a man or woman should be capable of doing sufficient work to keep himself; those that survive longer are a misery to themselves and everybody else.

885 With one extremely important exception the curve of a woman's life follows that of the man's. Except for the accident of death there are no breaks or sudden transitions in a man's life; for the majority of women there is the geographical transfer to her husband's home; although the marriage customs soften this as much as possible it represents a psychological change for a woman which has no parallel in the life of a man. It is probably for this reason that young married women appear so much more self-possessed and grown-up than their husbands. A man who stays in his own community is perpetually classified as weaker, or younger, or stupider than his elders or contemporaries; a woman in a new village is free from such comparisons and takes her place according to her own merits and abilities. A woman of twenty takes her full rôle in the group of adult women; a man of thirty is still somewhat bashful and is inclined to hide behind the knowledge and experience of his elders.

88 The undulations on the curve of Lepcha life are the alternation of plenty and scarcity, of feasting and everyday life. There is no absolute contrast between plenty and scarcity, between a feast and an ordinary meal; it is a question of quantity rather than quality

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There is no seeking for ecstasy, for experiences contrasting sharply with the normal, no desire for sudden and dramatised pleasure or grief which will stand out sharply against the background of life. Unexpected death is inevitably dramatic, and is therefore particularly disliked and feared. The only dramatic situation welcomed in normal life is a short and illicit sexual encounter. The Lepcha ideal is a constant state of euphory without sharply contrasing situations.

Since the Lepchas do not divide life up into different periods it is understandable that they should have no formulated notions as to what is the best time of life. The greater number whom I questioned said that they considered that the happiest time was when people were *fleng* or *num-leng*; this term (the second is the female of the first) has no exact equivalent in English; it means a full-grown person or animal who has not yet borne young and can only be translated by the blanket term of 'youth and early married life'. Not all, however, agreed that this period was the happiest; Jiroong, for example, considered the happiest period to be old age, provided a person had children and was not infirm. Perhaps the best illustration of the general attitude is given by Tafoor when he said: 'The happiest time of all is *fleng*. If a married couple have no children they have no anxieties or cares; they can eat their fill of the best and need only think of themselves. But when they get old life will be very bad indeed; they will have no one to look after them, they will be lonely and live badly.

'If, on the other hand, they are like me with lots of children, life will be very hard. They will have to work a great deal to feed and clothe them, and they themselves will only have coarse food to eat. Like me they will be torn with anxiety because they have to work in the fields while a child is ill at home. (His three-year old daughter had a bad attack of chicken-pox.) Like me they will pass sleepless nights; last night I did not shut my eyes. But when they are old and their children are grown up, then life will be easy for them; they will have the best of everything and will not have to work hard; their children will look after them, and the end of their life will be good.'

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

842 According to Lepcha theory a child's life starts at the moment of
843 conception. When the two secretions mingle[1] the soul arrives from heaven or the place of the gods (the first being the lamaist, the second the Mun, repository of unborn people); the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the
843 flesh and blood. The first portion of the foetus to be formed is the eyes, which are completed at the end of the first month; then from round the eyes the head develops and then the rest of the body downwards. The foetus is completely human with all its organs, and even its hair, at the end of the fifth month.

Within the womb is something resembling a nipple through which the child draws nourishment; this nourishment is something like butter, and is the transmuted food of the mother, just as milk is after birth. Consequently the mother is not permanently depleted by child-bearing; none of her body has gone to feed the child.

842 Conception is shown by the cessation of the menses, which were instituted for that purpose. The child does not feed on the menstrual blood; menstruation is exclusively a calendar.

843 At the fifth month when the baby is considered fully formed the expectant parents must start observing the numerous pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is not to be born malformed, or if the mother is not to have a difficult delivery. The entering into this period of pre-natal precautions is established by a Mun *pék*-ing both parents with a bunch of elephant grass in one hand and a live fowl in the other. Both parents are equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, and in point of fact the greater number of the precautions to be observed are concerned with work which is liable to fall to a man rather than a
843 woman. Copulation after conception has no influence on the foetus,
833 except incestuously, which would produce a miscarriage, and may

[831] [1] The Lepchas consider semen and the vaginal secretions to be parallel substances; they are called penis-water and vagina-water.

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843 [833]

be continued right up to birth; in the last weeks it is generally performed *a retro* lying on the side.

It would be tedious to give a complete list of the pre-natal precautions to be observed, but the following are some typical examples. If either of the parents are engaged in making a fence he or she must do the whole work by himself; otherwise the baby cannot be born properly. The father must not take any fish out of a trap in the river or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Neither parent must lock up anything except their own box or the child will not be able to be born until what is closed is opened; even the house door must not be fastened. Neither parent may eat animals which have met their death by accident or by being killed by a wild beast; the father must never look at a recently killed animal; he can kill animals but must run away at once. The father must not touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle; should he do so the mother and child are liable to die, but this can be prevented if a bridle is kept in the house which can be *pék* over the woman during delivery. If either parent should be weaving a mat or cloth he or she must never quite finish it but must leave a little bit over. The mother must not eat any joined fruit such as a double banana or the child's toes will be webbed. Neither parent must stick poles into the ground or tie knots or drive in nails or put small stones into the cracks between bigger stones when building a wall; all of these prevent proper delivery. Expectant parents must not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will be born dead; in the case of a solar eclipse both parents must stop in the house all day. If a child has recently died the paths it used to walk in and its house must be avoided; and as a general precaution it is better to avoid the paths and houses of all recently dead people. Expectant parents must not watch a dog being born; if they do so the child will have one eye smaller than the other. If expectant parents move a sacred image the child will be born dumb. Should either parent look at or kill a field-mouse or should they eat rice which has stuck to the bottom of the cooking-pot the placenta will not descend. There are a very great number of prohibitions similar to those listed above; the second half of pregnancy is a period of constant watchfulness for both parents.

There is a disease called *tamdit* which afflicts expectant parents; one loses all appetite while the other eats voraciously. This does not affect all people and may strike either sex.

The sex of a child is fixed after five months; and one can tell

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whether the infant is a boy or a girl by the fact that a boy is always higher in the womb. The sex can also be diagnosed by a Mun at about eight months when the Mun *péks* the body of an expectant mother. 843 [787]

The sex of a child is, however, not really fixed; its sex can be changed for that of another child in the womb either with the consent of the parents or surreptitiously. This is done very simply by a pair of expectant fathers or mothers exchanging any article. Tafoor's two middle daughters should really have been boys; when his wife was carrying the eldest daughter who was then a son, a lama from some way away asked him to change; Tafoor refused, whereupon the lama surreptitiously exchanged tassels on his rosary. The result was that a daughter was born, but with a boy's character which will continue until she has slept with a man; she climbs trees, kills birds, makes bows and arrows and has a large frame more like a boy than a girl; she is indeed considerably taller than her brother Chimpet, who is two years older. The second boy-in-the-womb Tafoor exchanged voluntarily with his younger brother Chudo, who had already had one daughter and whose wife was pregnant with another daughter; the exchange was successful for both parties. This exchange, however, cannot be performed if the two pregnant mothers are blood relations. This belief, which is universally held, is, I think, another excellent illustration of the Lepcha attitude towards the correlation of sex and temperament; sex is a question entirely of the primary sexual characteristics and nothing more.

Quickening of the foetus is merely diagnosed as a sign of life; but if a child moves a great deal inside the womb the forecast is that when it is grown up he or she will be excessively lascivious.

Miscarrying is caused by a devil Sor *moong* and is an hereditary sex-linked disability (as indeed is difficult delivery). As soon as a woman has miscarried she, unless she is seriously ill, and at all events her husband, must carry the foetus down to the river accompanied by a Mun who will there *pék* the couple with a bunch of elephant grass to which coloured threads, two rings, a rupee and a turquoise have been attached. On returning home an animal must be sacrificed and the Mun will *pék* the couple again. The wife is considered 'unclean' after a miscarriage and must be well washed and fed on chicken soup and butter. Ordinarily after the sixth month of pregnancy the mother will be *pék* by a Mun to avoid miscarriage as a routine precaution. If a woman who has mis-

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843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops. [847] Except in the theoretical case of a girl being delivered of a bastard in the forest and there killing it, infanticide is not permitted for any reason whatsoever; neither monsters nor deformed infants nor even incestuously begotten children will be killed.

844 To procure easy delivery a Mun will offer two chickens to Sor *moong* in the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy. Easy or difficult labour is considered to be a hereditary quality; a woman who after easy deliveries suddenly has a difficult one is considered either to have helped a woman in child-birth who had difficult labour, or to have eaten some of the food of such a woman. If labour is difficult a Mun and lama will be called in to find out the cause of this, which is almost certain to be the breaking of some pre-natal taboo, probably by the father. If this is discovered by divination the appropriate steps will be taken to remove the *tamtoom* by the undoing or unlocking that which had been incorrectly completed [845] or locked. It may be noted that it is impossible to procure an abortion or still-birth by the intentional breaking of pre-natal precautions; any such act which can kill the child will also kill the mother.

About a month before delivery is expected some specially strong *chi* is prepared and put aside; this must on no account be touched by anybody until the third day after delivery, when it is served at the birth feast; and, for a month after, it is given as a specially strengthening food to the newly delivered mother. Apart from this no special preparations are made for birth, which takes place in the husband's house; all the members of the household are present at the birth, but no strangers unless a Mun or lama has to be called in to give his services to help a difficult delivery. The mother is delivered in the kitchen; a rope is suspended from the ceiling to which she clings, squatting; she may be helped by the father or parents-in-law or anybody who knows how, who will squat behind and press on the woman's breasts and belly. As soon as the baby has appeared the cord is cut and the part attached to the baby tied up; then the baby is washed in luke warm water, wrapped in a cloth, and given the breast. Anybody who knows how can cut the navel-cord—the mother or father or anybody else who has

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experience and a small knife. Babies are not slapped to make them cry or take in air; they do so, it is said, automatically. Nothing is done to the mother's breasts to induce lactation. Considerable anxiety is felt, especially by the father, if the afterbirth is long in descending; if there is a delay the severed and tied navel-cord is attached to the mother's toe and she is then *pék* by a Mun. As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it and the cord are rammed into a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. Somebody not too nearly connected with the delivered parents will take this and either throw it into the river or fasten it high up on a tree out of the way of insects and animals; for should it be eaten the child will suffer from skin eruptions. Formerly the afterbirth used to be buried but now this is no longer done; for if it is buried in wet ground the child will get eye disease, if in cultivated ground the crops will be spoilt. One or two people said that in certain family lines the afterbirth is still buried, but I could not get any concrete examples of this practice.

If after the birth the blood does not flow freely a blood clot will be formed; to remove the clot the mother is given hot soup and drinks, and fish boiled in butter; if the clot does not come down she will die.

If labour is difficult a fowl and a goat should be sacrificed; the mother must eat the fowl by herself. The goat's heart, lungs, and liver must be boiled and hashed and mixed with rice and offered to the gods and devils; the rest of the meat belongs to the officiants.

It is believed that with breach presentation it is impossible for the baby to be born alive and it is rare that the mother should survive this; it is due to one of the parents having tied up a packet at one end to carry food and then, instead of taking the food out of the mouth, to have taken it out of the tied end. It is good if a new-born baby has hair, but should a child be born with a tooth in its head (a thing unheard of) that baby will be an incarnate devil. It will be reared, but when it grows up its thoughts and curses will be able to kill people. No cases are known of a child born in a caul; if it did occur it would be lucky. A child is unaffected by being born with a strangulating cord; it is the *tamtoom* of one of its parents having twisted a rope or string round their neck in the later stages of pregnancy. Birth-marks vary in their significance according to their place and colour. Big splodgy birth-marks show that in its former incarnation the child was a cow; red marks on the hands and arms that the child was formerly a killer of men—a soldier

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

597 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be
853 little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

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CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

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597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and
[166] child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth
[183] feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are [431] paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only [842] on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no pre-846 conceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to 827 their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name.
846 This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the
846 husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not
862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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Jiroong, who has extraordinarily precise memories of his infancy said that 'he was three when his sister was born. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth, which he witnessed and which frightened him very much. He was told that the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*. He was weaned in two ways; his mother's breasts were smeared with excrement, and a sister of his father took him away to her home and told him he must not cry because "Sanrong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him". He remembers vividly that for a week he cried every night for his mother's breast, and then resigned himself to doing without. For some time his aunt looked after him, sometimes keeping him with her at her house, and sometimes going to his home and sleeping with him.' In the same way Tobgé's wife had sent her son, aged a little over two, to live with her parents in their village a day's journey away. Since she was not pregnant again this conduct was disapproved of; it was considered to be a further illustration of Tobgé's irresponsibility and her immorality. 862

Normally a child is only suckled by its mother, but if the mother dies, or for any other reason becomes incapable of suckling the child, it may be suckled by another woman whom the child will call 'mother', or occasionally by the grandmother. A child does not have more than one nurse at a time, and would not be given a feed by a lactating woman during the mother's temporary absence. The reason given for this is that in taking another woman's milk the child would contract a debt which it would never be able to repay; and this debt would be a burden to it after its own death. 853

It is a general Lepcha belief that any woman who has once borne a child can produce milk spontaneously when a baby sucks; and this seems to be borne out by the fact that on occasion if the mother dies the grandmother will suckle the grandchild. I myself saw Kurma's mother-in-law suckling her granddaughter, though it was over twenty years since she herself had borne her last child. Some women too can produce milk without having borne a child; at first this milk is indigestible for the infant, but it is subsequently perfectly all right. If the mother dies the husband's breasts will very often swell; but they only produce a sort of lymph and not proper milk. As far as my observations and inquiries go it seems clear that Lepcha women lactate with far more facility than European women. 853 147 827

A youngest child will continue sucking until the mother's milk dries up, or until the child 'becomes ashamed'; this may continue 853

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853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them stand-
854 ing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

[753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

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a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the [826]

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856 upper. Should the contrary occur it will indicate that the child is a victim of the evil supernatural Sumoo Thor. When such people
826 grow up all their domestic animals will fail; if the child is a girl her husband will die young and she will be left an early widow; if a boy all his children will die in infancy. There is no unanimity as to whether parents would inform their children when they grow older of such evil prognosis; the general opinion is that though parents themselves would not tell the children the elder siblings are liable to know of the fact and to mention it in the course of family squabbles. Tobgé's sister is believed to have Sumoo Thor as she has pointed teeth in the front of her lower jaw. People have teased her about this but she has replied that she 'doesn't care, and anyhow her odd teeth are the result of a *tamtoom* and have nothing to do with Sumoo Thor.' There is nothing to do to avert the misfortunes from teeth arising in the wrong place; it is the destiny following a child from its previous incarnation. Similarly moles above the level of the eyes in boys and below them in girls portray the presence of Sumoo Thor; moles in the contrary positions are lucky.

A baby should not be given either bear or frog to eat or it will be late in speaking. You can tell from the way a child cries when it is six months old if it is going to be dumb or not.

854 Until children start walking they do not usually have clothes at all; in the house they are wrapped up in warm folded cloths, not so tightly as to restrict their movements, and usually lie on their back on the floor or raised bed-partition. For the first month or six weeks and occasionally longer they are carried in the arms; after that they are carried on the back of a parent or elder sibling. There are two positions in which the child is held on the back; the most usual is a semi-foetal one with the enveloping cloth catching the child under the knees which are folded up to the body so that the child only touches its carrier from the knees to the feet and with the upper part of the body. Occasionally, however, children, especially when they have passed one year, are fastened with their legs spread on the hips of the carrier. The baby is completely enveloped in a big cloth folded three or four times, which goes round the baby's body and is fastened round the front of the carrier. It always needs the help of a second person to place a baby on the carrier's back; the carrier supports the baby from behind with his or her hands and the helper folds the cloth round and supports the baby while the carrier ties it. The enveloping cloth usually comes up to the neck and the baby's head lolls com-

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PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

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854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that [171] there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. [857] Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

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854 is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him;
857 Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers
854 often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few
[833] weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

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Lepcha babies are in fact extremely quiet and I practically never heard one cry; often during the day-long ceremonies there would be five or six children under three present, and one would really not be conscious of their presence. Even when children can move about they are remarkably quiet; and the complete absence of fidgeting is one of the most noticeable characteristics of Lepcha children. 854

The mental reactions of Lepcha babies seemed to me very slow. Often a baby under a year old would catch hold of my finger; after about half a minute it would recognise that I was a stranger and start whimpering; but quite a little more time would pass before it would let go of me. Babies have far more confidence when they are tied on to the back of an elder person than when they are held on the lap or are on the ground. I frequently dressed small wounds and washed the eyes of babies fastened on a back without their showing the slightest fear or making any noise, whereas when they were held in the arms or seated in the lap they were much more nervous; indeed when parents brought up their babies for medical attention I found it was much easier to treat them if the babies were first put on their backs.

It is practically only after nightfall and on the rare occasions when its guardian has work to do inside the house that babies are laid on the ground. Unless its guardian can keep a constant eye on it babies under the age of three are all the time strapped on somebody's back, irrespective of the work the guardian may be doing; neither grown-ups nor elder children appear to be impeded by the burden of a baby. Lepcha babies spend a great deal of their time in the first three years of their life learning to abandon themselves completely passively to the movements of their active carriers. It is a common sight to see a woman pounding rice—a very violent exercise which necessitates alternately straining the body and raising the arms and then bending sharply almost double—with her baby strapped on her back and possibly sleeping; the baby's head lolls in every direction with each movement.

Youngest or only children are usually carried much longer than other babies and consequently have an even longer training in complete passivity. In a mixed gathering I always found it easy to spot youngest or only children, partly by their timidity and their fear of leaving their elders, and partly by their insistent demands for attention and the bad-tempered crying in which they indulged if this attention was not given—types of behaviour ordinary 855

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855 Lepcha children do not manifest. The extra timidity and lack of self-reliance seems to persist amongst such children until they are themselves parents. Amongst adults I did not notice any consistent type of behaviour which would indicate an only child, but the youngest, if there were elder siblings living, seemed to carry a great deal of their attitude of reliance on their parents over to their elder siblings until relatively late in life. The Lepchas agree that a youngest child is generally the best loved and most spoilt and given the best food, but they did not consider that there was any consistent difference in character between the youngest and other children ; some might be cleverer than their elders, others duller.

854 Babies are very little talked to, and when they are it is usually in baby language. They are patted and kissed quite a lot. Kissing—the pressing of the lips on to another's cheek—is exclusively a pattern of behaviour between adults and young children. It forms no part of adult sexual behaviour. Adults who have been in the relationship of parent and child click their tongues at one another when they meet after a prolonged absence. Occasionally a woman will play with a baby's lips and tongue with her own tongue—a pastime both parties appear to enjoy ; but by far the most common stimulation of children is patting their bottoms while they are being carried on a person's back ; both men and women do this almost automatically when they are walking about or standing talking while carrying a baby ; the patting is gentle and rhythmic.

Until a child is fairly well developed its parents do not encourage it to acquire physical independence and body techniques, chiefly I think on account of the long distances people have to go to reach their fields ; a toddling and stumbling baby is far more of a handicap than a carried one. Elder siblings are more likely to encourage a baby in walking and balance, as the baby is a far greater burden and drawback to a child of six or seven than to an adult. The Lepchas consider that the backwardness of only children is due to the fact that they have no elder siblings to encourage and teach them.

While a baby is still at the breast its chief diet is pounded grain cooked in water or milk. When they have all their teeth they are given little pieces of meat, but only as titbits and not as the main part of the meal. They are given fruits as they ripen. After about [252] the age of two they are given popped corn and cooked grain to nibble while they are hungry, and from about that age they start getting a sip of *chi*.

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By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood. 854 [157]

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In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not, 858

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858 as with us, almost a different species with their special 'childish' rules of conduct and ways of thought. It follows that—save perhaps individually in the immediate post-infancy period—childishness is not considered an excuse either for anti-social behaviour or for stupidity; a child is capable of committing crimes as much as an adult is, and may be punished as severely, though in different ways; and, judged by adult standards, their conversation is stupid and largely meaningless.

But although in one way adults regard children as potentially small adults, they have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them. Children are not quite human. If they survive they will turn into proper members of society; but if they die they will turn into particularly malevolent devils—num-een *moong*. There is no assurance of survival, either realistically or supernaturally; the horoscopes always hedge on this point: 'Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year . . . he will [766] live to be seventy-one.' A child who dies before about his tenth year is treated very differently to an adult; no funeral ceremonies are held for it and the body is thrown unceremoniously into the river; but elaborate apotropaic ceremonies are performed[5] to ward away its ghost-devil; and even should a child die at a distance these apotropaic ceremonies are performed, whereas for dead adults who die abroad no sort of funeral service is performed. The more attached a child was to his home and family, the more vigorously will his num-een *moong* attempt to reduce the other members to the same state as itself. Consequently a child represents potential supernatural danger. A dead infant turns into ing-bong *moong*, which is far less dangerous and much easier to get rid of.

The attitude of parents towards a child between the ages of about four and ten are therefore twofold: the child is a potential adult, but one in need of training and education to make him a socially valuable adult; at the same time the child is a potential source of supernatural danger, and as such it would be uneconomical to lavish too much affection on it. Should the child live it will be a great source of comfort and help; should it die it would be a source of great danger; the two contingencies must be taken into account. Finally, in the present a young child is often a nuisance and always an expense.

Some time between the child's third and fifth year—usually about the age of four—a child's achievement of physical indepen-

[5] See Chapter Thirteen, p. 352–353, also Chapter Eight, p. 233.

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dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

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867 young people copy their elders in showing reverence where reverence is considered to be due.

861 The child's moral education or moulding is performed in two ways—by precept and by punishment. Moral axioms stressing the 867 desirability of social approval are frequently repeated to children: 'As long as you help others, others will help you'; 'Nobody will help a thief', and so on.

If a child is naughty or tiresome—if it gets in the way, or makes a nuisance of itself, or if it excretes inside the house when it can walk out by itself—the annoyed adult will probably hit it in some way; it may be rapped over the head with the knuckles or have its ear tweaked, flicked with the fingers or cut with a switch; a man may catch it on the calves with the thin strap of his knife scabbard, a woman hit it with a stick such as is used for stirring food. These punishments for being a nuisance are given in a very impersonal way, almost as an automatic reaction to a disagreeable stimulus; a single movement is made, usually without the adult interrupting more than temporarily the work he or she is engaged on and without any verbal remonstrances or scoldings beyond that which may accompany the blow. The emphasis is on the annoyance or work caused to the adult, not on the naughtiness of the child. The punishments are always given immediately after the offence and in anger; they are given capriciously without any emphasis that they are for the child's good; children mustn't be a nuisance and mustn't cause unnecessary work. Occasionally when they are really cross people will hit a child harder than is necessary; Chimpet still carries the scar on his forehead from a blow he received from his mother when he was three or four years old; he kept on getting in her way while she was busy cooking, until she picked up a piece of firewood and hit him with it, unfortunately catching his forehead with a pointed edge. It is considered that usually one parent will punish a child more than the other, and it is generally the mother who does the most punishment. Often if one parent is cross with a child, the other will defend it: 'If both parents are angry together with a child at the same time they might kill it; if both spoil it the child will grow up naughty.'

But besides being an occasional nuisance, a child is also capable of committing crimes, and in such cases the punishment is severe and even drastic.[6] If a child steals (even fruit from the garden of a neighbour) or spoils anybody's property, or insults people or

[6] Many examples of these punishments are given in Chapter Fifteen.

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METHODS OF CARRYING CHILDREN

Tafoor and his youngest daughter : Jiroong behind.

Tafoor's two middle daughters.

[Facing p. 304]

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861 draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given
867 a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a
[827 deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born
858] 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

868 At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

857 From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

855 As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children
869 —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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869 copy their elders in prostrating themselves in front of the images of the lamaist gods, whether these gods are in the monastery or private houses.

858 The Lepchas are very explicit about their aims in the education of their children. Children fall into two categories—*ko-chet*, or good, and *ta-né*, or naughty. These terms are only applied to children and are clearly defined. 'A good child (*ko-chet*) will help its parents in the fields and in the house; will tell the truth and own up if it is charged with wrong-doing; will listen carefully to its elders and learn what they teach him; will help old people and will be peaceable. A bad child (*tané*) will tell lies and quarrel and insult people; if it is reproved it will draw its knife in anger and won't own up; it will take other people's property, and not do its proper share of the work.'

A child is not placed into one of these two categories early, for they are final and not temporary qualifications. The character of a young child is considered malleable, and the early years are used to evoke the *ko-chet* qualities and destroy the *tané* ones; a child is only called *tané* when it appears that education has failed. There is considerable variation of opinion as to when judgement can be finally made; some consider that a child's character is fixed at the age of eight, others that it will not completely manifest itself till the child is married; the general consensus of opinion is, however, that a child will fall into one of the two categories by the age of ten. Whatever age is chosen, it is believed that at that time, the child's character, previously vague and undetermined, is finally fixed and will not later be modified.

A child which may, if great care is not taken, later become *tané* is indicated in its earlier childhood by several characteristic traits; if it hacks at the house and door when it is given its knife, if it cries because it is scolded or because something is taken away from it which might be harmful or which does not belong to it, if it uses abusive language, these are all signs that the parents must be especially watchful. It is the parents' duty to eradicate such inborn naughtiness. A child's companions are also considered to be of great importance: 'Good companions will make a good child, bad companions a naughty one.' It is believed that excessive spoiling and indulgence by both parents may warp a child's character, but not irremediably.

If a child is not good by about the age of ten there is very little hope for it. The experiment may be tried of sending it away to be

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reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was 858
tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son;
but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son
finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem
who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who [732]
is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha 855
the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being
treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a 858
rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *aséḱ*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

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855 education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status
858 approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

857 Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging
[15] grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a
53] great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it.
195 Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is
864 another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are [839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, [522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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come back from another direction, often beating a home-made drum or singing some Lepcha equivalent to 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?' It may be remarked that a show of violence or a threatening gesture is always greeted with laughter by Lepcha children, whether made by an adult or another child; a cross voice on the other hand will quieten them at once and make them stop whatever they are engaged in.

There were some rather curious sidelights on these chasing situations. Chudo's four-year-old son was sadly torn between expectant pleasure and fear; he could see that his elders enjoyed being chased and rather felt he would like to be himself; he used to peep round obstacles at me and would invent errands for himself which would make him run quickly round me in a semicircle; but if I took any notice of his overtures and made a menacing gesture he would start to cry. Although he never got quite courageous enough to let himself be chased by me, he ended by having considerable confidence in me; and one day when he fell down and grazed himself he stopped crying as soon as I picked him up.

At the other end of the childhood range boys of fifteen and sixteen looked as though they would like to join in the game, but felt that their dignity should prevent them doing so. Patek, Ribu's elder brother, was particularly torn; he was seventeen, married, and, owing to the recent death of his father, the head of the household of six people, including two grandmothers; at the same time the desire to play was very evident and once or twice when there were no witnesses he joined in. Datoop's youngest son, aged sixteen and engaged, was in a similar state, but he yielded more often. On the whole the girls did not play much; the greater number of them were usually looking after a younger sibling and the girls tagged along with their mothers much more than the boys did. One girl, however, very much wanted to play. This was Prumtu, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Dunbi, and Tafoor's stepsister, who was afflicted with a very bad squint. This girl was the one really unhappy child in the village. Nobody liked her and she did not live at home but with her stepbrother, Tafoor, where she was a very unimportant portion of the large household. She had not yet been *asék*, partly because of her deformity and partly because she had the reputation of being lazy—*bla-bla-bla* as Chimpet said of her—and disobedient. She was a girl of singularly ungraceful and violent movement and was very rough; in play she would pinch people really hard and did not seem to distinguish between mock violence and real violence.

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857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor 776
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which 152
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

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591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in t
same house, and maternal relations generally live far away.
however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal gran
father or married aunt children can always go and pay them sho
visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and wh
was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger childre
used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, th
Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he wou
go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his famil
and at other times he would run away there of his own accord f
a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, how
ever, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except f
these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhapp
at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child
Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discusse
earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distant
related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chano
second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasional
threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhapp
but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turnin
into a bad boy, a *tané*.

858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhapp
time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children a
not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. Bu
most of the children realise, though perhaps they would no
enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity an
occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary pre
liminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adu
status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

SEX, MARRIAGE AND MATURITY

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On the question of attaining sexual maturity the Lepchas differentiate between men and women far more overtly than they do in any other phase of the life cycle. Theoretically they ignore physical puberty, have no word or words to express it, and pay no sort of formal attention to its arrival. With males the achievement of full sexual potency is considered to be a slow maturing process, taking place automatically over a period of years, with actual puberty marking, as it were, a half-way stage; though most boys produce emissions from about the age of fifteen, they are not considered to have achieved full potency till from three to five years later. With women, on the other hand, the physical signs of puberty—the beginning of menses and the swelling of the breasts—are believed only to occur through the external influence either of a man or of a supernatural named Kandoo *moong*. It is thought that normally a virgin girl will not menstruate nor will her breasts swell; these physical alterations only take place after copulation. It does, however, occasionally—though, it is thought, rarely—happen that a virgin starts menstruating; this indicates a visit of the supernatural Kandoo *moong*, and is considered to be a sign of good luck; some of the older women boasted that they had thus been signalled by this supernatural. The majority of women, however, depend on the intervention of a man; the physical signs will start whenever a girl experiences copulation, and there is therefore no stigma attached to grown men forcing little girls of nine or ten, and this does occur occasionally. It is possible that this cultural explanation of physiological processes masks a deep-seated male envy of the more conspicuous and dramatic life-giving functions of women and an attempt to make them appear dependent on male intervention. It would seem that this notion is at the base of the initiatory rites in many tribes of New Guinea and Australia, where

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881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

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betrothed, but of these three were mental defectives, one was a cripple, and two were carpenters just returned from the state school at Gangtok;[1] the remaining two were adopted children, and in both cases the adopting fathers said they were searching for suitable spouses. 582 584

Some of the boys and girls may have had a little sporadic sexual experience before betrothal, especially if their elder siblings of the same sex are married; but it is by no means unusual for both parties to be complete virgins at the time of betrothal. The period between betrothal and marriage is usually the time of greatest sexual adventure and promiscuity; but this naturally depends on the affection the two betrothed feel for one another and, to a lesser extent, on the distance between their two villages; a betrothed pair who are fond of one another may quite probably be sexually exclusive; where they do not get on, and particularly if there is overt hostility, they are likely to look elsewhere. 584 836

A marriage is never arranged by the parents of the child concerned; were the parents to do so either the parties would die young or the marriage would break up. In Lingthem the marriages are usually proposed by the Mandal and negotiated through the intermediary of the child's uncles and grandparents on both sides, and especially the father's elder brother, or if such a man does not exist, anyone who stands in a similar relationship. Thus, in the marriage of Datoop's children, Tafoor acted as the 'father's elder brother'; actually Tafoor is nineteen years younger than Datoop and they are four generations removed from a common ancestor (their respective paternal grandmothers were biological sisters); Datoop was an only child and Tafoor the most responsible related man of the same generation; since they are connected by females they are obviously of different *ptso*. 584

All the real marriage negotiations are carried on between two *bek-bu* (between-men) representing each side. Any experienced and tactful man with the exception of the spouse's father, who knows the correct things to say and the correct way to say them and has a sufficient vocabulary of *tang-bor* may take this rôle; in Lingthem the Mandal has performed this office for nearly every couple in the last twenty years, but in other villages a variety of people perform this rôle and the choice of *bek-bu* is a personal one dictated by the friendliness of the betrothed person and his family. In by far the greater number of cases the two children to be betrothed do not

[1] See Chapter Four, p. 121, and Chapter Six, p. 153.

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584 know one another at all before betrothal. In a relatively few cases they are near neighbours, in which case the betrothal is more likely to have been arranged at the request of the boy, or the children may have met casually on visits. This is particularly liable to happen when a woman's daughters marry back into their mother's village. Before the actual betrothal visit is made an 'uncle' of the boy may take him on a visit to inspect his future spouse; the boy may be asked if he fancies the girl, but the question is really a formality, for if he says 'No' this reply is usually put down to shame, and the betrothal is proceeded with regularly.

The first preliminary to arranging a marriage is a visit of the *bek-bu* by himself to the girl's village; on this visit he will take with him a load of *chi*. He will go to some neighbouring house—never the house where the girl herself lives—and will discover what man of the village is acting as the girl's *bek-bu*; to this man he will give the load of *chi* and start negotiations for the marriage. The girl's *bek-bu* will discuss the proposition with the girl's family—particularly her uncles—but the father and mother are also unofficially consulted. As a matter of form the girl's family will belittle the match on the first conversation, saying that they do not wish yet to get rid of their daughter, that the proposed match is not good enough, and so on. If they do not know the boy proposed they will send to make enquiries about his character, as to whether he is a good and industrious worker, peaceable and generous. The girl's family will always refuse at the first discussion and usually at the second; if they have not agreed when the subject is broached for the third time the negotiations are called off. If they do agree the *bek-bu* will present them with a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and a date will be set for the formal *aséḱ*, dependent on the lama's horoscope not being completely unfavourable. This preliminary is called *kachyoong*.

583 For *aséḱ* considerable gifts are demanded, and these are called 'the price of the bride'. These gifts do not actually represent the chief expense of the marriage—that is involved in the marriage feast—but they are articles which are not consumed in common but which are given over to the family of the girl. After these gifts have been accepted the marriage is considered to be legitimatised, even though the groom has not brought his bride home; children born after *aséḱ* are fully legitimate, and if the betrothal is broken, either the gifts or their equivalent in money must be returned, or another girl provided as substitute. The *aséḱ* gifts consist of two

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pigs, a large copper pot, or in lieu of it Rs. 20 for the girl's father, a length of fine cloth, or in lieu Rs. 13 (formerly Rs. 20) for the mother, Rs. 3 for the bride, and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee for the girl's *bek-bu*. 583

When these gifts have been collected, they are consecrated by a special Mun ritual in the groom's house before being taken to the girl's family. If the house contains a lamaist altar this is decorated and *chimi* are lit, and the offerings placed before it, the disembowelled pigs in front, and behind the copper pot with the other gifts on top of it. An officiant is needed to consecrate the gifts; it is preferable that the 'sacrificer', the *rum-faat-bu*, should be a Mun, but it can also be performed by any old and experienced layman with the necessary qualification. Incense is burned, *chi* from a buttered cup and rice offered, and a long invocation is made to the gods to bless the marriage and make it fruitful; besides the personal and *ptso* supernaturals of the groom special emphasis is placed on the appeal to Komsi*thing* and Tarbong-bo, who are involved in the original institution of marriage.[2] After the consecration a ceremonial meal of rice and sausages made from the pig's intestines is eaten, and the groom then sets off with his *bek-bu* and three men to carry the presents. The carriers should be ideally a paternal uncle, a maternal uncle and an elder brother; failing them, people standing in a similar position are employed. 583 782

At this visit the groom and his party usually stop three or four days at the girl's house. The two betrothed are meant to keep together, sitting by one another and feeding one another, and to sleep side by side. At this initial meeting the attention of all the elders is concentrated on noticing the way the two young people behave towards one another; because of this attention, and on account of the general situation, the young couple are usually in an agony of self-conscious shame and can hardly bear to look at or speak to one another. 583 584

After this initial visit the *asék* party returns home, but a few days later the groom makes a second visit, taking with him a gift of meat and usually accompanied by an uncle. At this visit the young couple, if they are of a suitable age, are meant to copulate together, and their uncles are meant to supervise this operation to make sure it takes place; if they do not, the one who refuses to do so—and it is considered equally likely that the refuser will be the boy or the girl—will be severely admonished and may be thrashed by

[2] See Appendix IV. The Sacred Story of the Origin of Marriage.

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583 his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not
584 sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

584 This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asík*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was
593 celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the
585 marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÊK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

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593 exclaiming: 'May that man die!' Whenever Nariya went to visit
585 her she used to throw stones at him to drive him away. It was said that she was carrying on a love affair with a Nepali in her distant village. On one occasion the girl's parents came to Lingthem, but Nariya was too shy to say anything. At the end of April Tempa said that he threatened the parents that if they did not send the girl he would apply to the police station. He explained that he spoke after consultation with the Mandal because Nariya's uncle Ashyok had not enough sense.

On May 11th, 1937, Nariya went to fetch his wife home; on May 17th she returned with him but bringing with her a younger brother aged twelve to sleep with her as a chaperone. On May 18th she went away again to Mangan to see her father, but she returned still accompanied by the younger brother on May 20th. On this day took place one of the bi-monthly monastery feasts and Nariya's wife took this opportunity to become formally introduced into the village community. Although she still did not sleep with her husband she seemed to be settling down and was helping in the preparations for the big annual feast of Boom koor which was to take place three days later, helping with the cooking and so on. She did not talk much but sat about quite comfortably in the groups where people made rather a fuss of her. All the time she kept some small child by her, either her own younger brother or Pankek, a little girl of six. She seemed to find comfort in the presence of young children. Tobgé was familiar with her, hugging her and feeling her breasts, but she showed no resentment. She had on a clean new green blouse but a filthy dirty skirt. The general belief was that in a day or so Nariya would succeed in sleeping with her and that then the marriage would settle down completely and happily.

Nariya it is true was not a very attractive character. He had an extraordinarily high-pitched almost eunochoid voice and a slightly sly expression. He was an orphan; his father, when he lived, was the richest man in Lingthem and a great deal of the wealth in cattle had been expended on the funeral feasts for him and many other relations of his generation who had died very close to one another. Nariya wished to regain his father's wealth and was therefore, most exceptionally for a Lepcha, engaged in strenuous
[556] economies, spending as little as he could, except when he had to give feasts, on clothes or food; he was rather secretive.

Of the other recently married men Rigya, Nariya's cousin and

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593 adopted brother, and Kutt'r were now getting on all right with their wives after a preliminary period of conflict in each case lasting about 586 four years. Kutt'r who was eighteen years old was married at the age of fourteen to a wife one month after *asék*, before which he had never met her. She had only come to live with him in the last few months. First of all they disliked one another thoroughly; then by the pressure of their families they were brought to sleep together but did not do anything. Only in the last two or three months have they copulated together; now they like one another.

586 Gongyop's son was born in 1919; he is a very girlish-looking and under-developed boy and preternaturally shy; it will be remembered that he was drinking his mother's milk up to the age of ten. Before *asék* he did not know his wife; *asék* took place about six months ago. The girl is older and bigger than he and at first he was frightened of her, though she spoke nicely to him. On May 19th he returned from his third visit to her at which they had slept together. He came home with a look on his face like a cat which had just been fed on cream and seemed rather proud of himself; he said that now he likes his wife. Datoop's younger son was *asék* by proxy for his elder brother Pichi; but Pichi at the beginning of May definitely refused the marriage and instead the youngest son was going to marry the girl. On May 9th he went off with his father to pay a visit to his bride. I asked the boy what present he was taking to his parents-in-law, at which his father replied 'His present is between his legs'. He was, however, also taking a leg of meat with him. Datoop hoped that, if the harvest was good, the girl would be brought home in the autumn.

On March 19th Mikmar, Chano's eldest son, aged thirteen, was *asék*'d to an unknown girl three or four years older than himself. By May 9th he had paid the girl three visits. They are patently unable to sleep together for Mikmar is still very childish, but they get on well enough together and give each other food.

584 In Lingthem there were only four unmarried girls over the age of twelve; of these Prumtu, the girl with the squint, is likely to wait some time before marrying and Tafoor's eldest daughter has only just passed twelve and has not yet been asked for. The other two girls are the two eldest daughters of Pargetu, aged sixteen and twelve respectively; they have been *asék*'d to two brothers. The 593 younger girl, Tangvoong, gets on well enough with her young husband, but the older one, Kondé, does not; the two both fight

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like cat and dog. This girl had a very unpleasant eruption of boils all over her face and I saw a great deal of her because she used to come up every third day to have her boils dressed; they were cured before I left. According to Tafoor, who is a very distant sort of uncle, the girl got her boils from a devil which was brought by her husband with the *asék* presents. She does not like her husband, and has so far refused to sleep with him (or, Tafoor thinks, anybody else). Tafoor considers that the fault really lies with the husband, who should have forced her to sleep with him when she came to his house; he did not, probably because he was ashamed. If she persists in not liking him she will be spoken to and given a beating to make her; it is simply naughtiness on her part. 593

During my stay in Lingthem Kondé was taken to visit her prospective husband once and the husband came also twice to her house to help her parents work. The situation did not develop in any way. Kondé had got set into an attitude of rebellious mutism in which she refused to do anything or to speak to anybody unless it was absolutely necessary. The only person who seemed to have any influence with her was Mrs. Datoop, who was a distant 'aunt by marriage'. Her attitude was completely mulish; so to speak, she dug in her feet and put back her ears and refused to budge. She showed no preference for anybody other than her betrothed; her attitude was entirely negative, she did not want to marry and especially not to marry the man provided for her. When she addressed him she used to use the childish abusive phrases, which have normally been abandoned and forgotten by people of her age. Kondé was a good and industrious girl and a considerable help to her parents, but she did not and would not get married. It was, I think, much more the fear of separation from her parents and home, even though she would be accompanied by a younger sister, which motivated her refusal, rather than actual dislike of her husband, who chiefly personified exile. 584

These examples will show that in about half the cases of betrothal there is considerable hostility on the part of the girl. For the girl marriage means nearly always geographical separation from her family—almost a second weaning—and many of them do not face this prospect cheerfully. This psychological disturbance cannot by any means be equated with puberty for betrothal may take place at any age from eight upwards. It is an intellectual and not a physical disturbance. It seems to me very probable that it is the successful overcoming of this second weaning which gives to young

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584 women so much more self-assurance than young men of similar age possess.

Occasionally the hostility to the marriage comes from the young man, but except in the rare cases where a boy is betrothed to a woman—the Lepchas do not regard disparity of age and in several marriages the wife is four or five years older than her husband—opposition is personal and not emotional. It is that particular girl which the boy dislikes, very often because he has already chosen somebody else whom he prefers. Aplung refused his wife (who was subsequently married to Rigya) because he wanted to marry Tobgé's stepmother, a woman considerably older than himself. When young men do choose wives for themselves they seem almost always to chose mature women. In the case of young boys who are *aséк* to older women or who inherit them as levirate spouses the hostility is to marriage and sex as such. They simply have no desire for marriage yet. Thus, Chélé refused, or tried to refuse, to have anything to do with the wife he inherited from an uncle, and Itup, Takneum's son, refused to have anything to do with the wife he inherited when he was ten.

Although all the boys that I talked to very much wanted to be grown up, they displayed an almost uniform lack of interest in marriage. The only boy who said that he wanted to get married was Ribu, aged twelve; and he said he wanted to get married so as to have somebody to help him in the fields. In his particular case extra help was welcome and necessary; the household consisted of two old widowed grandmothers, a widowed mother, and an elder brother Patek, aged seventeen, and his wife; the proportion of dependents to adult workers was particularly adverse. With the exception of Chélé all the boys over ten wanted very much to grow up, and especially to achieve complete sexual potency 'so as to be able to —— the girls properly', but marriage as such was considered as an inevitable but not particularly desirable condition of full adulthood. Chimpet based the adolescent attitude of marriage neatly in the antithesis that (*a*) marriage is a great waste of money and animals and (*b*) if you don't get married and sleep with other men's wives you will be fined.

For boys betrothal is a much more actively disagreeable time than for girls. Between *aséк* and the marriage feast the groom is in a more openly dependent and humiliating position than at any other period of his life. His parents-in-law have powers of compulsion and shame over him which his own parents do not possess; he

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has to visit his parents-in-law and help them with their work whenever he is summoned; incapacitating illness is the only acceptable excuse for refusing a father-in-law's order; neither personal nor family interests may stand in the way. When he is in his father-in-law's house the groom is under considerable restraint; he must be modest and circumspect in his language and behaviour and must be consistently respectful to his bride's parents and elder siblings. His wife's brothers have considerable licence to tease him and to use obscene language to him; he must on no account retort in kind; if he were to do so he would be shamed. Though his bedding is placed beside that of his bride he can only copulate with her in semi-secrecy; he has to wait until he is certain that everybody else is sound asleep, or otherwise he would be considered shameless. Even if he is on friendly terms with his bride his visits to her home are periods of constraint and humiliation; if, as so often happens, they disagree, these visits are likely to be the most positively unpleasant circumstances in his whole life. A groom can only leave his wife's family at the express permission of his father-in-law.

This period of semi-servitude is felt to be extremely disagreeable; but it is also considered inevitable, and no attempt is made to sidestep it. For the parents of the groom this service with the father-in-law is to a great extent considered as the continuance and finishing of the process of education which started when the child achieved physical independence. Their attitude could, I think, be paralleled with that of English middle-class parents who send their sons away to boarding school; they realise that the boys will be less happy than they would be at home but they consider it an inevitable stage in the attainment of full adulthood.

During the period of *aséḱ* the groom spends about half his time with his parents-in-law. The length of each individual stay depends on the distance between the two villages; if the two houses are not more than a day's journey apart about a week will be spent alternatively in each; if they are farther away, about a month. The period of *aséḱ* varies considerably, according to the wealth and inclination of the groom's parents; marriage may be performed one month after *aséḱ* or there may be an interval of several years; the average period is about eighteen months. It is also necessary that the lamas find an auspicious day for the marriage from their horoscope books, but that does not usually entail a delay of more than a few weeks.

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584 Betrothal does not by any means necessarily imply sexual connection between the betrothed. It does, however, usually indicate the commencement of sexual activity for both parties, and almost [833] always for the boys. The majority of Lepcha men receive their sexual initiation and education from a potential levirate spouse— 836 the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle'—and very often at the woman's direct invitation. It is a Lepcha axiom that women never make the first advances and most people repeat this statement; but a number of men when recounting their own early sex experiences tell of direct invitation and solicitation from these potential spouses; timid Jiroong indeed was at the age of fifteen as nearly raped as it is possible for a man to be by his elder brother's wife. Fathers instruct their sons as to the women they have a right to sleep with, and the women whom, though potentially heritable, they must avoid because their fathers have already slept with them.[3] Elder brothers, too, on their marriage give their younger brothers formal permission to sleep with their wives. These legitimate copulations must be practised discreetly and nearly always take place during the temporary absence of the real spouse. It is considered desirable that a boy should first sleep with a woman older than himself so as to be taught how to do it properly. For the Lepchas there is nothing incongruous in a man sleeping with a woman twice his age, and it would seem indeed that young men find older women more attractive; in the few cases where a young man has been able to choose his own bride they have always chosen elder women. It has already been remarked that fully grown younger brothers transfer many of their attitudes towards their fathers to their elder brothers; I find it, however, impossible to gauge to what extent if any the elder brothers' wives are equated with the mothers.

833 Although the great majority of men receive their sexual initiation 836 from an elder sister-in-law, a few have their first experience with contemporaries. Thus Chimpet has twice slept with a girl of his own age at Parfok at her invitation; he enjoyed the experience and would like to repeat it, but does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. Similarly Rigya was seduced at the age of fifteen by a girl of the same age in a neighbouring village;

[3] See Chapter Six, p. 153.

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it was not her first experience, though it was his. Subsequently his parents tried to betroth him to her, but she was already bespoke. 833

I unfortunately was not able to obtain as much or as precise detail on the early sexual life of women as I was of men;[4] from such information and reports as I was able to gather it would seem that potential sororate spouses play a much smaller rôle in the initiation of young girls, chiefly no doubt because they generally live some way away. When they are not deflowered by their spouse (this happens sometimes) girls would seem to start their sexual life with unrelated men, often it would appear with visitors to their village. Among the Lepchas the difficulty of talking to women on such subjects was not, as more usually happens, the jealousy of the husbands, but the fact that almost every woman from eight to eighty interpreted any sort of special attention as an attempt at seduction, an attempt which—no matter what their youth or age—they had no intention of repelling.

Until the husband brings his wife home, and indeed till the birth of the first child, Lepcha men and women have complete sexual freedom at every point where this freedom does not endanger the social fabric; that is to say that all potential partners outside the stringent incest categories are permissible, provided that adultery, as the Lepchas understand the term, is not flagrant, continuous or emotionally important. After the birth of the first child adultery —that is to say connection with a woman who is not a potential wife—on the part of the father is thought to endanger the life of the child or children. Except for casual encounters at the forest or at feasts my impression is that adultery is uncommon, and that copulation with permitted partners only takes place intermittently in the absence of the actual spouses. 837

Lepcha sexual experience can be divided into four categories: legitimate copulation with one's spouse, which almost always takes place in the house; semi-legitimate copulation with potential sororate and levirate spouses, which usually takes place either in the house during the husband's temporary absence or in casual encounters in the forest or field-houses, since it is considered tactless to allow the husband to witness such copulations; thirdly, intrigues with unmarried girls which entail clandestine visits by the young man by night; and, lastly, sudden and clandestine encounters 836 837

[4] I was told the precise details of the early sex experience of at least half the men of Lingthem, but only three or four of the women. It was one of the most popular subjects of conversation among the men at the monastery feasts.

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836 which may or may not be adulterous, in the fields or forests or at
837 big feasts. The last-named are always excessively hurried and rather romantic; hurried because there is the fear of being surprised and romantic because they are unforeseen and unprepared. Occasionally to seduce an unmarried girl men will promise to give them presents of money and clothes and they will do so if the woman consents; she will either tell her parents that she has bought the new clothes, or, if this is too improbable, that she has borrowed them. If the woman refuses, men do not insist. It quite often happens that a girl will give her lover small presents—straps she has woven herself or food smuggled out of the house in her dress. It is said that presents are not given to seduce married women.

836 If unmarried and unrelated men and women wish to sleep together, the man will find out from the girl her exact sleeping position in her house; then at his own home he will wait till he can hear everybody sleeping, creep out on hands and knees, run to her home, which may be a couple of villages away, and creep in beside her. He must return to his own home before cockcrow. Normally if a man is surprised he will run away and not come back again; but it occasionally happens that these originally clandestine intrigues become socially recognised and the lover goes to live, either temporarily or permanently, with his mistress, particularly if the latter is past the age of childbearing. Thus Patek's 'elder grandmother', the sixty-six-year-old Nandjému, has as paramour a lover of the same age, a lama who travels round the country making prayer wheels; whenever he is in the neighbourhood of Lingthem he lives with the old woman as her husband. Similarly Kurma lived with his first wife, Gongyop's sister, for some years before he married her.[5] If the wife is of childbearing age she will more often go to live with her lover, especially if he is a householder in his own right; thus Tobgé's sister lived with Nahyeun, Tempa's sister with Jiroong, and Ongden's second wife with her husband for considerable periods before their marriages were legitimised.

837 Sex does not form part of the Lepcha pattern of hospitality, but if a visitor can make his own arrangements this is agreeable to all parties. In such cases once the visitor has got the girl's consent to sleep with him he learns from her the exact position of her sleeping place, and visits her as quietly as possible as soon as the rest of the company are apparently asleep.

[5] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 398–399.

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The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

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833 potent; trustworthy people said that when they were first married they would copulate with their wives five or six, and even eight or nine times in the course of the night, though they would then be tired the next day. I have got no comparable information from women but such statements were often made in mixed company without the women present making any comment or in any way expressing incredulity. This potency diminishes around the age of thirty, but copulation once nightly is still the general rule for married couples. Tafoor claimed that in his youth he was almost indefatiguable, but says that now he only sleeps with his wife once every three or four nights; this is the reason why he is relatively fat, for chastity induces fatness. It is believed that people accustomed to regular copulation will feel extremely uncomfortable for the first few days if for any reason their partner is removed; but it is considered that people over thirty should be able to support long periods of chastity (with the exception, some laymen say, of the lamas, who cannot do without sex even for a week).

The normal position for Lepchas copulating is for the woman to lie absolutely prone and relaxed, while the man kneels in front of her between her legs. In situations where discretion is necessary both parties lie on their sides, copulation taking place *a retro*; and in some sudden and quick encounters both parties remain standing, the woman leaning against a tree or wall. During copulation the woman lies completely motionless and relaxed, but this passivity is not equated with non-participation, and the orgasms of both sexes are considered identical in nature. The Lepcha attitude to 831 semen is practically the same as that commonly held in Europe; it is thought to be a secretion which is constantly produced and stored against use, so that a husband who has been for some while separated from his wife will have particularly large reserves. The testicles are regarded as the reservoirs of semen; they are not paid much attention to in conversation and have little rôle in the constant flow of sexual jokes. It is believed that if a man's testicles [826 hang lower than his penis he is more likely to be fertile than if the 842] contrary is the case. Semen is considered to be a rather unpleasant and soiling substance, and these characteristics are advanced as one of the major reasons against masturbation. Lepcha men consider that copulation is most enjoyable either with a very young girl or with a woman who has borne more than one child; in the latter case there is the added advantage that copulation is thought to be much less exhausting. Men with large penises are considered to give

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

586 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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of the bride will lie in wait for the groom armed with nettles and other thorny plants and will pretend to drive him away; to be allowed to go on the groom must give them all a present of at least six annas. As soon as the groom has given his presents he returns to his own home, and almost immediately after the bridal procession sets out. 585

The bridal procession consists of twelve people besides the bride; they are (1) her *bek-bu*, (2) an old and experienced man, usually the Mandal of her village, (3) a 'sacrificer', preferably a Mun, (4) a paternal uncle, (5) a maternal uncle, (6) an elder brother, (7) an elder sister or aunt, who is called the bride's friend, (8) a younger sister, (9) a younger brother, and finally three men to carry the presents from the bride which consist of a load of *chi*, a load of popped corn, and a pig. The girl's parents stay behind and play no rôle in their daughter's marriage; for them it is considered to be a sad time, for it marks the formal loss of their child. In the bridal procession the six named relations may always be classificatory ones if there are no 'real' ones available.

Three times on the way to the groom's house the bridal party stops for ceremonial food and drink, which is provided by the groom. The first stop is called *chang yook*, when food and *chi* are provided; the paternal uncle and the sacrificer must drink two *patyoot* of *chi* at this place; the rest may do as they please. The second halt is called *long-so* and there three big bamboo holders of strained *chi* are provided for the party. The final halt is called *Gorshoon*; this is very near the groom's house and here a shed is erected to accommodate the bridal party. As soon as they arrive at this shed another container of strained *chi* is provided.

When the bridal party has entered the temporary shed the girl's *bek-bu* goes into the house with a ceremonial scarf which he offers to the groom's family; if there is a lamaist altar in the house the scarf is put on this. Then the bridal party is regaled on ground rice and *chi* and this is followed by a ceremonial meal called 'wiping away the sweat of the bride' and consisting of eight big handfuls of rice and eight fowls, which are boiled and given to the bride's party and also to the older men and lamas present. Following this the girl's *bek-bu* ceremoniously offers the presents which have been brought in the name of the bride's family to the elders of the groom's family. These presents are received by the old men of the groom's family with a show of great surprise and some indignation: 'Why do you bring these?' they say, 'we only want the

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585 bride and no presents.' The *bek-bu* answers: 'We have brought these to make a sacrifice.' These gifts are then dedicated by a Mun or experienced man; the day after the marriage this dedicated pig and grain will be carefully divided up and all the girl's relations-in-law and the other inhabitants of her new village must eat a small portion; in this way the new wife is formally accepted into the community. Everybody has eaten food of her providing.

Since the bride and her party have usually come from some way away this ceremony generally takes place towards evening and it is followed by a feast after which people go to sleep. Unless the bride is a widow or already the mother of her husband's children she will not enter the groom's house that night but will pass it in the shed which has been specially erected for that purpose.

There may have been some guests present on the first day, but it is the second day which is the really big feast, at which almost everybody in the village will be present.

The lamas arrive about nine o'clock with their books and musical instruments and will take up their position at the right-hand wall of the *dé-ong* against the altar, with one of the Dorjé Lapoon at the end nearest the altar. Intermittently during the whole day they will burn incense and read their books and play on the musical instruments. Except for the ceremony of 'receiving the bride' described lower down, they will only leave their position for a very few minutes at a time to go out and ease themselves. They eat and drink where they pray and from the moment they arrive a *patyoot* of *chi* is placed in front of them, which is constantly replenished and renewed.

Early in the morning the first ox—'the ox for eating'—will be killed and cut up; its ribs are boiled for the feast and sausages are made out of the intestines; the head, right foreleg, left hindleg, and half the sausages are preserved for the bride's family. Then a second ox—the 'ox of the groom'—is tethered fairly near the house but somewhere in the forest—that is not on cultivated land. By this ox is erected by the Mun or sacrificer a sort of altar on which is placed a scarf and a rupee and a big container of strained *chi* and also a bowl with butter at the side from which the strained *chi* will be drunk. Then the Mun dedicates the live ox to all the gods and repeats the long sacred story which tells of the origin of marriage.[6] This prayer and rehearsal of the story takes upwards of three hours; unless somebody wishes to be able to tell the story in his turn, the

[6] See Appendix IV.

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officiating sacrificer will probably be completely neglected. The rest of the company will be talking and eating and drinking. The bride and her party will probably remain fairly isolated in their shed. When the sacred story is finished the bride and groom and the bride's party and the groom's party are all summoned to the Mun's altar. Then the Mun calls on all the gods of the neighbourhood and prays to them not to be angry but to let everybody enjoy the ox which is going to be killed and to bless the married couple and give them many children. He then turns to the bride and groom and preaches a sermon to them, telling them to love one another and not to quarrel; if they separate may the ox they are going to eat burn and poison them. After that he hands to the bride the buttered bowl filled with strained *chi*; she sips it three times and after each sip the bowl is refilled as each sip is a symbolic emptying of the bowl. After the bride the groom drinks, and then the members of the bride's party and the groom's party in turn take three ceremonial sips from a smaller buttered bowl. This drinking of the buttered *chi* is really the sacramental consecration of the marriage and represents a pact of friendship between the bride and her new family and village.

When the ceremony has been completed the ox of the groom is killed with a bow and arrow. It is absolutely necessary that the wife's younger brother, or if she has not got one the nearest possible classificatory younger brother, should kill this ox; if anybody else were to do it the bride's family have to pay a fine of Rs. 5 to the groom's family. The ox is shot twice from a very short distance and an attempt is made to pierce the heart behind the left foreleg. It is a very messy way of killing an ox, which takes about a quarter of an hour to die. When the ox is finally dead the bride's younger brother pours water over its muzzle after which this ox is also cut up. The meat from this ox is not consumed at the feast; the head and one of the hind legs will be taken back to the wife's family as well as half the intestines turned into sausages; the rest of the meat will be cut up and divided and given away as parting presents to all the guests.

After this ceremony the bride and her party are conducted by the two *bek-bu* into the *dé-ong*, where they take up their special positions against the left-hand wall facing the lamas. These positions are, starting from the altar, the old and experienced man, the sacrificer, the paternal uncle, the maternal uncle, the elder brother, the 'bride's friend', the bride, the younger sister and the

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585 younger brother; on the opposite side with the lamas are, starting from the same direction, the Mandal, a *youmi*, a paternal uncle and the groom. Standing between the two parties are the *bek-bu* of the bride and the groom.

When the two parties are settled the two *bek-bu* make a collection of money from every guest; each guest should give at the very least a ceremonial scarf and a rupee; those who can will give more. The husband's *bek-bu* makes a list of all the gifts given and the return presents of meat are apportioned roughly in proportion to the money given. When the money is collected it is divided up by the two *bek-bu*, the greater part going to the bride's party who have to receive Rs. 3 each, with the exception of the paternal uncle who gets Rs. 4 and the bride's friend who gets Rs. 6. The *bek-bu* receive Rs. 5 each. If there is any excess of the money it goes to the married couple, but if there is a deficiency the husband has to make up the required sum out of his own pocket. After this the *dé-ong* is cleared except for the parties of the bride and groom. In the kitchen a Mun of the husband's village will be calling on the gods. Just before the ceremony starts a ceremonial meal of a boiled pig's head and chickens is partaken of by both parties.

Then is performed the ceremony of 'receiving the bride'; in this ceremony the man's *bek-bu* plays no rôle. The conversation chiefly takes place between the girl's *bek-bu*, her uncles, and the bridegroom's party. The girl's *bek-bu* takes a scarf in one hand and a rupee in the other and addresses the girl as follows: 'You have been married into —— *ptso*; now you are bound to them and if you had any other lovers you must leave them; now you have no connection with people other than this *ptso*. In the beginning Tarbong-bo and Naripnom and Komsi*thing* originated marriage and so we perform it today. Now you are bound.' With these words the girl's *bek-bu* puts a scarf round her bowed neck and the rupee into her joined hands and then the girl's *bek-bu* sits down.

After this the Mandal will ask the bride who are her special *moong* and *rum* (devils and gods) and what sacrifices are necessary. Should she say there are none, or keep silent, the *youmi* will say, 'Don't tell a lie; we know there must be at least one *rum* and one *moong* and if you have children and they get ill a Mun or a lama will find out what supernaturals you have brought here; so speak up and tell the truth.' After that someone on the girl's side, most probably her paternal or maternal uncle, will tell who are her private supernaturals and what are the sacrifices necessary for them.

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[415]

ONGDEN'S WEDDING

Above: Ongden in a clean dress. Behind him old Adér.

Below: The feast.

[facing p. 336]

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585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two
522 parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shes*—a prayer for future children.

585 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to
533 feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the
535 ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

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585 the song beginning, 'Father, help me! Mother, help me!' The dancing is completely unorganised, and merely consists of indi-
533 viduals hopping or stamping more or less rhythmically as they feel
535 disposed. Unlimited food and drink are provided, and it is considered desirable and almost inevitable that everybody should get as drunk as possible. There is a strong sexual overtone to the atmosphere and towards evening many couples separate and go off into the forest for a short spell; they mostly return to the house where the feast is being held before night has completely fallen.

585 At the only marriage feast that I witnessed—that of Ongden with his second wife—I noted 'About seven o'clock the noise was exactly like a very crowded English pub at closing time: the atmosphere was unbelievable. Nearly a hundred very dirty people in two small rooms which had been shut up as much as possible with the balconies closed by wooden partitions and so on; there was a huge fire of wet wood smoking hard so that one could only just see across the room. In the kitchen some people were sleeping round the fire while others were still cooking; at one side there was a very bloody mess where sausages were being made from the entrails by three young men; others were asleep in the muck. In the *dé-ong* the ground was so crowded with sitters and sleepers that there was only just room for the female relations of the husband to circulate with their wooden ladles of boiling water with which they constantly replenished the bowls of *chi*; they appeared to be the only relatively sober people present. The bride and her party sat as if they had never moved, in their long line against the wall of the *dé-ong*; the groom wandered about rather disconsolately, talking very little to anyone. Old Adér, who had previously pulled up his dress and exposed himself during the sacrifice, started singing in a minor key dragging over the syllables; whereupon Lumba's *jethi* (that is his first wife), who is renowned as a singer, got up and asked for some meat to be given her as a fee for the song she was going to sing; she was given some and started singing, but nobody took much notice though everybody said "hush"; the singers walked about as if they were cabaret artists. The pace of the evening got slower and slower and sleepier and sleepier; the children sat about or slept. It would have been very rude for anybody to go home before sunrise the next day.'

585 This marriage of Ongden with a widow was slightly irregular
587 and abbreviated, first because it was for both parties a second marriage, and secondly because the bride had been living with her

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husband for some months before he had assembled enough food for the ceremony. The ceremony only took place for one day instead of for two and the bride and her party went straight away on arrival into the house. The day before the marriage the bride withdrew to a village one day's walk away instead of to her own home which was three days away, where she met her bridal party. After the ceremony the post-nuptial visits were curtailed, but it was considered improper for the newly married couple to start living at home at once and so they spent a few days at the house of his 'nephew' Tingkep.

Early in the morning after the marriage feast the bride and groom, together with the bride's party and two friends of the groom to carry the heads and legs of the oxen, set out on a return visit to the bride's house. When they have arrived the groom stops as little time as possible; overnight if the bride's home is some way away, otherwise not even that. On that day all the guests who were present at the marriage feast return with gifts of crops or *chi*, which they give according to their wish and ability as a help towards the very considerable expense of the marriage feast.

Two weeks later the groom goes to fetch his bride again. Either at this visit or at the subsequent one the girl's father provides a feast for the newly married couple. When the bride and groom leave the girl's house her father sends back as a present to the man's father a load of *chi* and a load of rice. The couple then stop a week in the husband's house; at the end of that time they go back to the girl's house, taking with them as presents to the girl's parents from the groom's parents exactly the same presents as the girl herself had brought. The couple then spend a few days at the bride's home and then finally return to the groom's. At this final removal the girl brings with her such private property as she may possess in the shape of animals or harvested grain as well as her clothes and jewels.

Some time during the first year of marriage the bride may go to visit her parents with a present of a pig and they will in return give her a milch cow or a heifer. This does not always take place, usually only if the bride's parents are relatively rich.

If the horoscopes of the married pair are unfavourable or if ill-luck is foretold, this ill-luck can be temporarily averted in the following way: two lamas will make small millet images of the husband and wife called *parr-ko* and into these the lamas will transfer all the ill-luck which is foreseen in the sacred books. When

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585 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their
777 own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat
592 subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

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husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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592 then the son is responsible for the taxes and the management of the household and his father and mother almost assume the rôles of honoured and leisured guests. At this period his sons in their turn will probably be getting married and he has to make the necessary economies for their marriage expenses; then his wife too will become a 'house mother' and will have the work taken off her by her younger sisters-in-law and daughters-in-law. Some younger brothers never achieve the position of house father; all their life until they are too old the position will be held by their elder brother and then when the elder brother wishes to retire it is probable that the younger brother will be about the same age and will prefer to hand over the work and responsibility to his nephew. If, however, there is considerable discrepancy in the ages of the two brothers the elder brother will hand over the management of the property to his younger brother, who will then in his turn re-transfer it to his elder brother's eldest son. Theoretically there are some advantages in being house father as the house father has control of the crops and their proceeds; but in point of fact there are more duties than advantages; the house father has to look ahead for future expenses and to make provision against them; he has to take what few decisions need to be taken; he has responsibilities but relatively very few rights, for if he started abusing his position, say taking all the money and grain for himself and his family and neglecting his dependants, either there would be a public scandal or the family would break up. The younger brothers would demand and get their share of all land and property so that the house father would be left alone with very diminished resources and would probably find considerable difficulty in getting the necessary help for the work in his fields and so on.

Such a gradual evolution and development is the ideal pattern of Lepcha life, but owing to the high incidence of sterility and a very uneven death-rate few people attain even a near approximation to it. As has already been explained[8] if the first wife is sterile it is permissible to take a second wife from the same family group as the first, but not every man has the money or inclination to do this, and there is no guarantee that the second wife will be fertile. It is said that in the majority of cases the first wife welcomes the arrival of a 'younger sister' as this will considerably lessen her work; it is not, however, unknown for co-wives to quarrel.

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's

[8] See Chapter Six, pp. 166–169.

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Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after an obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own.

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive.

[p. 344 is blank]

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATH

i

761 Death is the real enemy of Lepcha life. Disease and hail and failure of crops occupy the Lepchas more emotionally, for these are possibly preventable accidents and against them precautions can be taken. But death is absolute and final and cannot be fought against; some precautions can be taken against a death which has struck one member finding other victims in the community, but against death itself there is nothing to do. Death is too terrible to envisage clearly or discuss often; death, and, to a lesser extent, the dead who have suffered death are hated and feared and not talked about.

764 Once a person is dead there are two things to do; the danger of the devil that has caused his death finding another victim in the community must be averted and the dead man must be got rid of as thoroughly and completely as possible. People who have left this world never return to it benevolently; if they do have any contact with the living it is as malevolent supernaturals, as devils. The older a person grows the less likely is he to hanker after the world he has left and therefore the less he is to be feared; children and young people suddenly torn from their life will surely turn into malevolent devils.

766 The infection and danger of death is strictly local and therefore if a person dies away from home no sort of ceremony is held for him; the body is just unceremoniously thrown into the river. Why should strangers be at the expense of a funeral? No relics will be returned. When the survivors hear of the distant death of a relative they will simply set up prayer flags. They will not hold a *sanglion* (death ceremony), for if the soul has turned into a *moong* it will haunt the place where it died and will not trouble *them*. That the soul of the dear departed will not be able to find its way to the *rumlyang* (paradise) does not matter. The ceremonies

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766 to be described later are more for a protection for the living
a help for the dead. Only if a young child were to die away f
home would the ceremony of Dek Flee[1] be held to keep a
haunting demon.

775 It is at death and the ceremonies which surround dea
the beliefs and ritual of the Mun and lamas most obviousl
764 and contradict one another. Both creeds hold that the soul
the body is lost in some dangerous region through which
be conducted; and therefore representatives of both cree
to conduct the soul away. But the soul's destination o
wanderings is completely different; for the lama the soul w
for forty-nine days in a sort of purgatory, after which it is
and rewarded and sent on to its next incarnation, whether i
the earth as another human being or as an animal or to hea
a period of blessedness or to hell for a period of tormen
the Mun the soul is conducted to the *rumlyang*, where it
again as a tiny child, very often of a different sex to its form
in the *rumlyang* the child grows up to maturity and leads a
and immortal life among all the other dead, a life similar to th
on earth except that there is no death or disease or want.

The implicit contradictions in these beliefs are realised in t
of lamas and nuns, for whom the Mun perform no ceremoni
souls of lamas and nuns are not led to the *rumlyang* but co
through the *bardo* or purgatory. But for laymen ceremonies
religions are held simultaneously; the lamas perform ins
house while the Mun does his ceremonies outside.

764 There are three alternative methods of disposing of a
it may be burnt, buried, or thrown into the river. Which
766 is adopted depends partly on the condition of the deceas
partly on the lama's horoscopes. The lamas and nuns are
buried; they are almost always burnt unless they die in t
season, in which case their bodies are thrown into the river. I
are never burnt; whether they are buried or thrown into th
depends on the lama's horoscope; the greater number are
Young children should always be thrown into the river, bu
sionally an exception is made; thus Patek's mother when s
in rapid succession four children in infancy burnt the body
last one in anger and as a protest at the way the supernatura
treating her; but such behaviour is extremely uncommon.

764 As soon as a person dies the position in which he has

[1] Vide sub, p. 352–353.

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764

and the hour thereof is noted and told to a competent lama, who then consults the book, *Detseu*, in which are specially drawn diagrams for each calendrical division and body position. These diagrams show in which direction the corpse should be removed for disposal; this is never on any account through the door, but may be through either the walls or the floor; a hole is made especially for this purpose which will be filled up immediately after the body has been taken away. The lama also casts the dead man's horoscope[2] from which is learnt the supernatural causes of his death and the ceremonies which must be performed by his survivors to help the dead man and ward off his fate from the living. The horoscope also indicates what sort of people—that is people born in what year—should attend to and carry the corpse and whither the devil which has caused this man's death has gone and whom it menaces next. Also if this devil has been brought by some object this object is designated so that it can receive ritual cleansing. On the day of the death of an adult and also on the day of the disposal of the body and the disposal of the ashes from the burnt paper face nobody in the village should work.

Lamas are summoned immediately after death to help the soul of the man to find heaven by giving him advice and showing to the corpse pictures of the devils and perils which he is likely to encounter. If the dead man is a lama the corpse is tied to a pole along the back; the knees are bent up to the body and held by a length of cloth; the head is propped up with a stick and the hands are joined with the palms together as in prayer. After the first day the corpse is placed in a big copper pot (after the cremation this pot is returned to its normal use after being given a thorough wash). In front of the corpse is placed a small table on which are arranged three water-containers, two dishes of rice and a *chimi*; beyond this is placed another table on which all the sorts of food which the dead man used to eat in his lifetime are placed; the food is changed at every meal and the old food is taken away and can be eaten by anyone. This preliminary ceremony lasts for one, three or seven days, according to the wealth of the deceased's family; however long the ceremony continues the lamas who are watching and instructing the dead man must not sleep at all. The others can and do sleep, often in the same room as the corpse; the corpse soon starts to stink even though it is anointed with butter mixed with cloves, nutmeg and camphor and dressed in clean clothes.

[2] See Appendix III, c.

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764 While the corpse is in the house the people of that household must not eat salt or butter.

The corpse of a layman is also doubled up in the same way, but the hands are crossed on the breast and the head is allowed to flop. The body is put in a big openwork basket. Usually for a layman there is only one day's wait between death and burial, but occasionally people will wait three days. A layman also is instructed and advised by lamas, but at the same time the Mun who will perform the *sanglion* and any other benevolent people who know how to are helping the corpse on the road to the *rumlyang* by meditation—*munthen*.

ii

764 Before the body of a lama or nun is carried out of the house a pyre must be prepared; this consists of a square pile about
766 seven feet high, with eight layers of wood if the deceased is a man and nine if a woman. The pyre must be made of the wood of one of two designated trees and must not be composed of more than three trees; the first tree of all must be cut down by the nearest available male relation of the deceased. The place where the pyre is made and its direction in relation to the house of the dead man will have been indicated by the lamas' horoscope; there are about half a dozen burning and burial places around Lingthem in more or less every direction; they are all removed some way away from any habitation and are placed on uncultivable spurs of land. The hour at which the corpse should be removed and also the year of birth of the people carrying the corpse are designated by the horoscope.

The journey from the house to the pyre must be made without a break. The body is put on the pyre seated to face west—that is towards Kinchenjunga. If the dead person is a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy, just before the corpse is placed on the pyre or in the grave the body is ripped open so that the navel-cord is torn and the foetus is placed on the mother's lap. This can be done by anybody who has sufficient courage. Then all the male relations of the deceased stand at all four sides of the pyre and set fire to it simultaneously. If the corpse has left a widow or widower a portion of that person's hair is cut off and burnt at the same time as the body. It is essential that every piece of wood and bone should be burnt to ashes; if necessary the corpse will be broken up to this end. About 8 lbs. of butter, a big basket of rice and all sorts of other

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grain are burnt with the corpse; a sort of long-handled shovel is 764
used to make these offerings and they are thrown on to the pyre
a little at a time, the officiating lama counting out loud and finishing 766
up with a shout. The lama counts up to five ten times, up to seven five times and up to eight ten times. A pig, or very occasionally an ox, is killed at the house and this is put on to the pyre as food for the corpse after the corpse has been consumed. This animal is not usually consumed completely but merely cooked; the people who gathered the wood for the pyre are given this meat as their fee; if there is no meat they are given money. The relations of the dead man must stay by the pyre until the ashes are quite extinct.

All the unrelated people who have accompanied the family to the burning place are given a meal of rice, and a small gift of money —usually one or two annas—is given to a representative of each household present. Similar presents are also given to those who attend a burial if the mourners can afford it. On the way back from the disposal of a corpse a small bonfire is built for the mourners to jump over, and a knife or some other piece of iron is put in the [783] doorway of the house for people to step over; both these precautions are taken to disinfect the mourners from the possible magical contagion of death.

Except that the corpse is not dressed and anointed in the house, 764
but only when it is brought to the place designated for burial, the preliminaries for burial are exactly the same as those for burning. The corpse is carried in the basket to the burial place by one man, a near relation if possible; a husband must always carry his wife and a son his mother. As well as the friends and relations of the deceased a Mun accompanies the buriers. When the party arrive at the chosen site the corpse is placed on the ground and is washed and anointed with the mixture of butter, cloves, nutmeg and camphor, and wrapped in a new cloth which is arranged so as to cover the face. Then a circular grave about the height of a man is dug; a big stone is put at the bottom and the sides are lined with stones and four ropes are placed against the four corners. While these preparations are being made the surviving spouse or eldest son will stay by the corpse and talk to it saying: 'We are preparing this new house for you.' The body is put into the grave still sitting in the basket, orientated to face Kinchenjunga; then on the top of the grave and corpse is put a big flat stone and on the top of that four cooking stones supporting another flat stone. On the top of this is placed a little white stone which serves as an indication that the place is a

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764 grave and should not be touched. When all is in place the four ropes are pulled away simultaneously. The Mun then ceremoniously cleanses the hands of the buriers with a pot of strained *chi* and a bristle brush.

For disposal by water all the early preparations are the same except that a lama goes with the burial party and before the body is put into the river offers *cherkem*—that is strained *chi* with grain floating in it—to the supernaturals of the water. The basket is put into the water first and then the body, head downwards; it is pushed out with a forked stick under the arm-pits and floats away. In the case of a small child the body and the basket are thrown away without any sort of ceremony. No gifts are put in the grave or thrown into the river; the corpse has merely its new cloth and the basket. In all forms of disposal of the body the knees are fastened to the body by a cloth.

iii

After the disposal of the corpse there are still two actions which must be performed: the getting rid of the devil which has caused the death and the safe conducting of the dead man's soul well out of the world. The order in which these are performed depends on whether the horoscope has divined that the death is caused by Sandé *moong*, or by Shidook *moong* or by Arot *moong* (death by violence). If the death has been caused by Sandé *moong* the disinfecting ceremony is performed immediately after the removal of the corpse and before the *sanglion*—that is to say the speeding of the dead man's soul; the other ceremonies are performed about two months after death.

764 To remove Sandé *moong* the presence of two lamas is necessary,
778 one to read the sacred books and one to perform the necessary actions. On a rectangular board they construct out of powdered grain and water a life-sized Cat with a very long tail with a horse's saddle on its back and a relatively smaller rider on it; in front are two more men, behind two more. Three triple strands of coloured thread are put round the Cat's neck, one of which is held by the rider and the others by the two men in front. These images are decorated with various sacred and symbolical devices made out of wood and thread and there are offerings of crops. Besides this object, one big and two smaller torches are prepared and also some heaps of small pebbles and dried buckwheat powder, mixed with rotted bamboo (here called 'dust').

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When all is prepared the lama reads the book Sandé Kangyour; while this is being read a layman offers *cherkem*. When the reading is finished the Cat is turned round towards the door and a path of powdered 'dust' made for it. Then the real expulsion starts. The lama throws 'dust' on to the torches to make them flare; pebbles are thrown into the corners of the room. Then all the neighbours and friends who are present take the weapons they have provided themselves with—axes, knives, hammers, or for women the heavy weaving shuttles or sickles—and start beating in every corner of the house. Others armed with the torches go round the village, or at any rate to the neighbouring houses, and some with their weapons go and beat in corners of adjoining houses. Still others accompany the Cat, which is carried a little way along a path and then upset. Should its head turn towards the house there will be another death in the village. Those who accompany the Cat whistle and shout 'Ya-Ho-o-o' and throw stones and beat around with their weapons.

If it has been found from the horoscope that the death infection was brought in some object in the house, this object is taken away with the Cat and left on the path. A couple of days later it is taken back, thoroughly cleaned and re-taken into use.

When all taking part in the devil-chasing have gone out of the house those who remain shut the door. By the door is a big copper vessel full of water from a stream with a woman beside it. After the Cat has been upset the carriers return shouting '*Hla-gélo : dé pam*' (God has conquered and the devil been defeated'). The woman will sprinkle with the water all who have gone outside; only then will the door be reopened and the people given strained *chi* which has been prepared for them by those who stayed inside.

If the death is discovered to have been caused by Shidook *moong*, the ceremony of *shidook kyop* is performed about two months after the death. For this ceremony it is necessary to kill an animal, either an ox or a goat, and the offering is made on the skin of this animal, of which the head and forelegs are left unskinned and attached. In the centre of this skin is made a 'throne' of a mound of earth in tiers, on which is placed a black 'devil's palace' or *deu* of thread; in the four corners are four small images of dough stamped with butter and decorated; below them are thirteen smaller images on stands, to which are given thirteen bamboo bows-and-arrows, thirteen knives, thirteen sickles and thirteen black 'devil's

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764 palaces'.[3] In front of all these is placed a special plate of pottery made with nine handles; this is left empty. The ceremonial is the same as for Sandé *moong*.

If the deceased has met his death by violence, that is through Arot *moong*, the ceremony of Tikar Sangyour has to be performed. After a death by violence has occurred in a family the descendants should keep up the ceremony yearly for ever, for violent death is infectious and hereditary; it can also be performed apotropaically. The path by which a corpse, who has died violently, has been carried should be avoided; and at the *sanglion* of such people no raw meat is given, but only cooked meat, as raw meat will carry the infection. Tafoor performs this ceremony because his grandfather fell from a height and was drowned; so do Ongden, Nariya, the Mandal (although in his case this is precautionary) and many others.

764 On a block of wood one large and four small images of a horse with a rider are made of millet powder coloured red. In front of 778 this is a black image of the female supernatural Mamoo *moong*, and in front of her an inflated animal's bladder. In front of this again is a *chimi* and at the four corners are four pots containing respectively scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison, and water from five rivers. There are also small offerings of grain and various decorations. While the special sacred book is being read *cherkem* is offered. When the offering is carried out a torch is laid down on top of it facing in the same direction; on top of this are placed leaves of wormwood and a stone on top of that.

766 In the case of a child dying before the age of about ten none of the ceremonies described above are performed nor is a *sanglion* made for it. Instead of these the ceremony of Dek Flee is performed by a Mun three days after death. For this ceremony a goat is required and also a tray covered with a black cloth on which is put samples of every sort of grain and a bundle of seven pieces of wood tied up with reed; besides that a bundle of elephant grass and other prickly plants are needed. The ceremony is performed inside the house.

The goat is tethered to a pole and a second rope made out of reed with three knots in it is tied round the goat's neck. This the Mun and all the members of the household in turn touch, and then the Mun throws the rope forward out of the house door three times. If by any chance the knot should point inwards there will be another

[3] Thirteen, being an odd number, is lucky.

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death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some 766
firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *péks* the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*tiklyong-kup*) is set up [831]
between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time.

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* 764
all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*.

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the 764
dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn 778
a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine

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loops on the circumference[4] and NI in Tibetan script inscribed in the middle. On this is set a bamboo *patyoot* about a cubit high and a little broader than that usually employed for *chi* drinking, with a rupee in the bottom and filled with grain; into this is stuck an upright bamboo of the height of the corpse when sitting and at shoulder height is an inserted cross-piece the width of the dead person's shoulders. On top of this is placed a piece of paper supported on a square stretcher: this is stamped with a die representing a divine face; it is the same for all ages and conditions, but different for each sex; it is inscribed with the name of the dead person. Then this dummy is clothed with the clothes of the dead person so arranged as to look as if it was sitting with the legs crossed and feet hidden and hands folded. A big scarf which has to be borrowed or bought for the occasion is draped from the image's behind up the back and over the face, so that the paper mask is hidden.

This image is placed in the *dé-ong* facing the lamas, who sit on the right of the altar; in front of the image are three tables. On the first table are seven small cones of rice, seven *chimi*, two pots of water and two pots of rice; on the second table is a plate and cup and all sorts of food; on the third are the dead person's jewels, if it was a woman, or the knife and bow-and-arrows if a man. A little to the left before the first table is a *patyoot* of *chi*; behind and also to the left must sit the Mourner—the surviving spouse if there is one, or failing that any near relation. The Mourner only has to be present when the image is given food or talked to. Except right at the end other ordinary people do not come into the *dé-ong*.

If the dead man was a lama all the lamas of the neighbourhood will come automatically; if he was a layman only two are necessary, a Dorjé Lapoon and a *kané*. Old and experienced men are allowed to sit with the lamas. A certain number of nuns with their prayer-wheels are necessary; they sit against the wall opposite the altar.

The length of the ceremony depends on the wealth of the deceased. If he was a poor man it will only last twenty-four hours; if he was rich, up to seven days. The *chi* offered to the corpse is changed three times daily, the food twice; each meal must have some meat in it and also tea, rice and all vegetable foods. When the meal

[4] There would seem to be a connection between this nine-looped circle, and the nine-handled cup used in the ritual to expel Shidook *moong*, but I could not learn what this connection is.

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is presented to the image the lamas address it, saying: 'Do not think of this world; we are giving you all the food you used to eat when you were alive; take it and *go*.' On these occasions the Mourner must be present. When the food in front of the image is removed it is eaten by those present who are not of the immediate family of the deceased; it is not thought to have lost any virtue or to be in any way dangerous.

The lamas have to read five sacred books; all read the same passage at the same time. Simultaneously there are six books which the nuns should read; those who cannot read turn their prayer-wheels. The whole time the reading is going on the lamas and nuns must not sleep; they may at intervals go outside for a respite, but they must never settle down to sleep. If all the books have to be read in a day and a night they have to hurry; if there is more time, they can go more leisurely; if the books are finished they start again at the beginning. The family, other than the Mourner, and their friends spend their time in the kitchen eating and drinking and talking and sleeping.

When the reading is finished all the relations gather. A specially clean plate is placed in front of the Dorjé Lapoon. Then the Dorjé Lapoon addresses the soul of the dead man telling it that everything has been done for it and that it has found its way to paradise, and then the *kané* takes off the paper head and hands it to the Dorjé Lapoon who holds it in his left hand; in his right he holds a big *chimi* and lights the paper from the bottom so that the ashes fall on to the plate. While the paper is burning all present shout 'Hep' three times in a loud voice, which signifies that the soul has got to heaven. The *kané* prepares a ball of reed ash mixed with water; the paper ashes are inserted therein and then placed in a *choten* mould into which a little oil has been poured. The ashes are rammed down and taken out in the form of a small *choten*. This *choten* the Dorjé Lapoon sprinkles with holy water (*tyü*); after which a hole is made in the bottom of the ash *choten* with a stick and a few grains of rice are pushed in and a gold and silver ornament are symbolically scraped with a knife over it. This *choten* is placed on the altar. In the case of ordinary people it is taken away the next day by the head of the household and put either in the river or in a cave or on a rock. If, however, the deceased was a lama of exceptional holiness a big stone *choten* will be made; some of the dust from his bones from the funeral pyre are placed in the foundations and the small *choten* is put in the centre.

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764 When the ceremony is finished the clothes of the deceased are divided among the lamas; the Dorjé Lapoon gets the best coat and the *omzets* the other garments. Before these are worn the lama will hold some mustard seeds in his hand and pray silently; he will then throw the seeds on the clothes; this is considered sufficient disinfection; after that the garment is washed and can then be worn or sold. In the case of a dead lama his skull-drum and bell goes to the Dorjé Lapoon and his rosary to the officiating *kané*; the *kané* also gets the *patyoot* with the rupee and grain inside, the dead man's plate and cup, and the big scarf which covered the face of the image. At a lama's *sanglion* the nuns are given a rupee a head and a maund of grain between them, and the lamas are given Rs. 20 and three maunds of grain to divide. For a layman's *sanglion* the gifts are usually considerably less.

The day after the *sanglion* is finished the place where the body was disposed of is visited by some near relations of the deceased to see if there are any footprints in the near neighbourhood which would indicate that the dead man had reincarnated as an animal. The footprints of cats, dogs and tigers do not indicate reincarnation; they merely show that a devil has passed by in this form, and I never heard any actual incident of the prints of any other animal being discovered.

If everything consumed in this *sanglion* were paid for in cash it would represent an expense of over Rs. 200, for a continuous feast with meat has to be provided for all present. If the survivors are poor everybody will bring contributions of money and food. The ceremony is absolutely necessary to free the soul of the dead man [775] from devils and lead it to heaven. Were it omitted the soul would wander miserably on earth, doing harm to the survivors, and eventually reincarnating as a worm or some noisome insect or beast of prey.

Money should be distributed to the monasteries in the name of the dead man; if he was a poor man it need only be given to the three monasteries of Zongu, but if he was rich to the monasteries all over Sikkim.

It is considered desirable that the Mun *sanglion* should take place on the same day as the disposal of the corpse. If, however, the lamas' *sanglion* is postponed that of the Mun may be also. Very few Mun know how to perform the death ceremony; in Lingthem the only one who knew how to was old Pumri and she was never employed as it was not considered suitable for a woman to perform

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the ceremony. Usually an old Mun from a village farther up the valley was summoned for the purpose. Gongyop said that he knew how to, but he was lazy and did not want to perform the ceremony and therefore did not get his qualification (*loong*). 764

Before the Mun comes out of his house to perform the ceremony he will spend the night communing and calling on the gods to help him conduct the soul to heaven; in particular he will call on Hit-*rum* and Dé-*rum*, the ancestral gods, and such ancestors of the deceased as have died in the same way as the present man. The Mun is accompanied by a friend or assistant called Mun-tyol.

After the funeral a pig is killed and one of its trotters is put aside on a wooden tray for the ceremony. The following articles—all very small—are also prepared inside the house and put on the tray: two ladders made out of the wood used for arrows, which are placed on either side of a tiny log, two small torches, one dish of rice mixed with charcoal and pebbles, a comb and a bristle brush. There is also prepared separately a rope of bamboo bark about twelve feet long and also 80 lbs. of *chi*, 40 lbs. of rice, and strained *chi* in a filtering bag. When all is prepared everybody in the house goes outside into the yard, except the lamas who stay inside reading their books. First of all the Mun takes the knife of the deceased (or, if the corpse was a woman, her sickle) and starts cutting the weeds in the courtyard. If there are many weeds others will help after the Mun has started. When the space is cleared the mourners have a meal; the Mun sits aside and is merely given *chi* to drink. An animal, preferably an ox, is brought in and offered to the devils who are plaguing the dead man's soul in order to induce them to desist; then the ox is killed by some unrelated layman and skinned and cut up. The intestines are boiled.

While the ox is cooking a shed is made for the Mun out of bamboo mats suspended from a post; to this post the cooked intestines are tied. (These are taken away in the morning by the Mun-tyol.) A little way in front of this is another post of a special sort of wood to which is attached the rope of bamboo bark; two knots are tied in it, the one nearer the post being for the devils, the farther one for the gods. The other end of this rope is held during the whole ceremony by the Mun and is finally severed with a pointed knife after the Mun has communicated with the dead.

The household sends out to the Mun a dish of boiled rice and a portion of the ox's ribs cut in two—one part for the Mun and the other for the Mun-tyol—and also black and white sausages.

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764 Generally the Mun only eats the rice, the meat being taken away in the morning with the other presents.

There is also prepared a dish of all the sorts of food—dried bird and fish, ginger, different sorts of grain and fruits and roots and *chi*—that the deceased used to eat.

When everything is ready the Mun retires to the shed with his assistant. The rest of the people sit around but not so near that they can hear what is going on. Before retiring the Mun puts on a special head-dress of white cloth arranged like a turban with in the centre porcupine quills and tigers' whiskers and at the side peacock's feathers. The Mun now starts to *munthen* and calls on the dead man's soul, always holding the rope in the left hand. When he has got into communication with the dead man he starts giving him advice and help. When the Mun starts talking to the soul of the deceased the Mun-tyol sends for the tray which was prepared in the house and these objects are given to the soul by means of throwing them out of the shed (no notice is taken of them after) with instructions how to use them. First the soul is given the rice with the charcoal and pebbles in it; he is told to eat the rice and leave the charcoal and stones; the devils, pursuing and hungry, will pick over the stones for food and give him time to escape. Then he is given the ladders and torches to help him. With their aid he will be able to climb over the log which will block the way of the devils. He is also told to throw behind him the brush and comb which will grow into huge fences and block the devils' way.

Now the dead man's soul is coming near; when the Mun-tyol sees the signs that it is approaching he sends for the collection of food which has been prepared and this is offered to the dead man with the words: 'All these foods which you used to eat when you were alive you can have now.' Then suddenly the Mun 'dies'; he falls and his assistant catches him. The Mun's soul has departed from his body and in its place is the soul of the dead man who speaks through the Mun's lips: he speaks very slowly and in a very soft voice; it is not the voice of the Mun nor is it the voice of the dead man.[5] The Mun-tyol will then question the dead man, saying: 'Tell us what devils are troubling you; tell us how you died.' Then the dead man will say the cause of his death, whether it was caused directly by a devil or whether it was through

[5] Gongyop said that this possession is not so complete as the prophetic possession described by him in Chapter Eight; the dead man's soul does not enter the body of the Mun but 'sits on his shoulders'.

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the intervention of some human enmity, either *mik-jit* (envy and cursing) or the direct sending of a devil.[6] 764

When the dead man has said what was the cause of his death he leaves the body of the Mun, who recovers and cuts the rope between the two knots, so that the devil's knot is left attached to the post, with the pointed knife that he has held in his right hand all the time. He then conducts the soul to the *rumlyang*, where all the dead live; he will find there a house prepared with bedding and all utensils; he will lead the soul into it and lock it in. This ends the Mun *sanglion* and in the morning the Mun goes home, taking with him his presents; they consist of the meat already mentioned, a leg of beef, Rs. 5 (or at any rate Rs. 3), the dead man's knife, or sickle, and one complete set of his clothes. These he wears or gives to his wife. The rest of the dead man's clothes are divided up among the children six months after death; they are washed three times and fumigated with incense before wearing. No danger is attached to them. The dead man's name is used for the ceremony and is not avoided afterwards.

It will be more convenient to finish the description of the Mun's ceremony here. One year after the original *sanglion* the Mun will go into a trance again, though an even lighter one this time, and visit the *rumlyang* once more. Outside the house in which the soul of the dead man is enclosed Hit-*rum* will be standing on guard; for him will be offered presents of *chi* and butter and sugar-cane and fruits and flowers and roots of many different sorts. After this the Mun unlocks the door of the house and finds a little baby inside; to this baby he presents a dress suitable to its sex. (The Mun is provided with two cloths, one for a boy and one for a girl, as it is by no means certain into which sex the dead person will reincarnate.) When the Mun has opened the door the baby comes outside and lives with the other people in the *rumlyang* who are his ancestors; the baby will grow up as human beings do and when

[6] I asked whether, if the death was caused by human agency, the survivors ought to try to take any revenge? The answers were somewhat confused (a) No, they should not because they could not be certain that it is true. (b) If they were not able to deal with the devil before it caused the man's death they would not be able to deal with it after. While the man was alive they should try and send the devil back to the original sender. (c) They can try to please the devil which has caused the death by giving it presents and induce it to return and smite the sender. I raised this point with several people and the general feeling was that revenge could not and should not be attempted. The greater number of people were surprised at my suggesting it.

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764 the Mun visits the *rumlyang* in future years he will see the soul grown to be an adult. There is no death in the *rumlyang*, but when I pointed out the contradiction of there being no death for the souls with the lamaist belief that the soul is reincarnated on earth, a compromise was reached by stating that the soul would die in the *rumlyang* if it were going to be reincarnated on this earth.

V

765 On the third day after the Sandé Kangyour or after the *sanglion* —according to which comes first—one Mani prayer-flag is erected; on the twenty-first day a second is erected; and on the forty-ninth as many as can be afforded up to the number of one hundred and eight. The cost of a single prayer-flag for the dead[7] is reckoned to be about a rupee; the person setting it up provides the cloth and any competent lama can stamp it with the die which is kept in the monastery. The flag is inscribed with the most usual name of the person in whose intention it is erected written in Tibetan script. One flag for each dead person is usually set up in the monastery precincts, either the one put up on the third or twenty-first day. This prayer-flag is sanctified by a lama, usually the Dorjé Lapoon, reading a sacred book over it and sprinkling it with holy water (*tyū*), while a boy stands by holding two *chimi* on a plate; it is set up with a shout and afterwards a procession of lamas, nuns and mourners walk round it and the monastery turning their prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* After the circumambulations are finished the whole procession prostrate themselves three times before the flag and touch the post first with their prayer-wheels, and then at a lower place with their foreheads.

The other prayer-flags set up outside the monastery precincts (they may be erected at the place where the corpse was disposed of or by his old home) are erected without any ceremony and may be put up by any layman. It is believed that the life of a prayer-flag will be proportionate to that of the person in whose intention it is erected; a flag for a young person will be soon tattered and torn, while that for an old person will last longer. It is permissible for anybody to dismantle a ragged prayer-flag, but it is rather unwise for a person unrelated to the setter-up to do so; for the setter-up might not consider it completely worn out, and in that case the

[7] Prayer flags for the living are slightly smaller and therefore less expensive; there are two dies for these but only one for the benefit of the dead.

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person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15. 765 [688]

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the 765 152

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765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
764 formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

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BOOK THREE

Lives of Lepchas

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DEVIANTS AND DEFECTIVES

i

128 Except when I have used individual illustrations the four chapters
157 of Book Two have been written about an abstraction called 'the average Lepcha'. Of course such an abstraction has no more real existence than 'the average man' or 'the man in the street' dear to European and American journalists; he is a compromise between the ideal personality set up for the Lepchas by themselves and the observable behaviour of the majority of the Lepchas in Lingthem. It is the Lepcha stereotype who has been described.

157 The Lepcha stereotype is unaggressive, sociable, hard-working, constantly good-humoured, greatly interested in direct consumption (eating, drinking and copulation), fundamentally optimistic. The relationship of the Lepcha stereotype with his fellows is based rationally on mutual benefits and obligations; very little stress is placed on personal affection and practically no interest is taken in, and no allowance made for, individual character or temperament. The Lepcha insists very firmly on the independence of the adult individual and the family group; no attempt is made to dominate or exploit others, and any attempt by others to dominate or exploit is resisted as actively as the rules of the culture permit. The Lepcha identifies himself strongly with his family group and with his
[61] immediate community—the village; the identification with the tribe as a whole is much less strong, and one of the Lepchas' chief social weaknesses is that, except in the case of serious crime, the Mandal and inhabitants of one village have little influence over the inhabitants of any other village under a different Mandal. The Lepcha stereotype calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility and almost unquestioning confidence from younger people in their elders.

128 Although this stereotype does not, I think, correspond exactly to the behaviour or attitudes of any one person, it is not for that

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128 reason valueless. It represents the ideal towards which the Lepchas strive and to which they attempt to mould their children, and it is in the deviations from this imposed stereotype that the greater number of psychological difficulties for the Lepchas arise. As such it has preponderating weight in the formation of individual character, and constitutes a point of reference from which deviation can be measured.

157 Deviations fall into two groups, negative and positive; people may lack some characteristic or qualification called for by the cultural x159 stereotype; or they may manifest characteristics and types of behaviour which exaggerate cultural characteristics, or they may have temperamental qualities definitely opposed to the cultural stereotype. Judged by such rigorous standards there is probably nobody who is not slightly deviant. There are, however, two people in Lingthem, Chala Mandal and Tafoor, in whom I could discern no temperamental cause for psychological discomfort. Both had reasons for a certain distress, but they were external ones; the Mandal was unhappy because he had no son, Tafoor, I think, slightly disappointed because he had neither the wealth nor position of his late father the Muktair. These two people practically embodied the Lepcha ideal, the Mandal for the layman and Tafoor for the lama; Tafoor's household also approached more nearly than any other to the Lepcha ideal.

[158] Owing to the Lepchas' great tolerance of—or rather indifference, to—shades of character, the maladjusted tend to be sociotic[1] rather than neurotic deviants. The only temperament type to which the Lepchas manifest constant opposition is the aggressive and domineering personality; the person who wishes to domineer or to command is constantly thwarted; to paraphrase Saki's epigram, there may be people born to command among the Lepchas, but they never find anybody born to obey them. The most outstanding of these aggressive characters were Tempa, who was described in Chapter Five,[2] and Kurma, whose story is given at length in the next chapter. It is worth noting that these two are also sociotically maladjusted; Tempa is a foreigner from outside Zongu, reared in a mixed community, and living under the slightly humiliating condition of resident son-in-law (*komok myok*); Kurma was adopted by an elderly couple as a little boy, was very unhappy

[1] This term was first used by Dr. Moreno to distinguish socially maladjusted from temperamentally maladjusted people.

[2] See pp. 124–126.

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in his adopted parents' house, and finally ran away. Besides his aggressive characteristics Kurma shared with Tempa a tendency to boastful lying in an attempt to give himself greater importance than he possessed, and a desire for money for its own sake. Kurma was also unique among the adult Lepchas in getting obviously drunk. 157 159x [733]

The foreigners, the people not born in Zongu, are the most obviously disturbing elements. Tempa and his sister, Mrs. Jiroong,[3] caused more trouble than all the other inhabitants of Lingthem put together. In his earlier years, too, the first Dorjé Lapoon, who is half Tibetan, caused a very great deal of disturbance.[4]

Owing to the very late psychological maturing of the Lepchas it is difficult to speak with confidence of the characters of most of the men under thirty and of most of the women under twenty. Except where there was strongly marked deviance, such as in the cases of Chélé, and the two girls Prumtu and Kondé,[5] the younger people lived psychologically so much under the shadow of their elders that it was impossible to foresee how they would act when they were independent.

Mrs. Datoop and Lumba's first wife were both rather more independent than the Lepcha ideal type of woman calls for. Lumba's first wife insisted on living in a field-house because, although she got on well with her co-wife and step-children, she disliked living in a crowd and having to bend her wishes to the majority. Mrs. Datoop almost openly ruled her husband and her household; she was far more business-like and managing and practical than is necessary for a Lepcha woman. These qualities, however, did not bring her into conflict with the other Lepchas, for they were developed along lines congruent with the Lepcha culture; her excessive qualities were for the Lepchas good qualities and she held a high place in the general esteem. In a culture in which the temperament rôles of men and women are violently contrasted she would have been severely maladjusted, for she was almost the most 'virile' person (in the Occidental sense of the word) in Lingthem.

Mrs. Tafoor was rather more actively unhappy, for she was a woman of fairly violent temper and aggressively sexed; she was in the unfortunate position of a person who liked a quarrel and who could find nobody to quarrel with. Tafoor used to tease her

[3] See Chapter Five, pp. 140–142.
[4] See Chapter Sixteen, pp. 416–420.
[5] For Chélé see Chapter Six, pp. 164–165; for Prumtu, Chapter Eleven, p. 311; for Kondé, Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

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157 a lot, but very slyly; thus when in her presence he was explaining
159 to us the way marriage horoscopes are cast he pointed out with considerable emphasis that the books foretold without any question that she would die young, very many years before he did.[6]

The most general excessive quality among the Lepchas, particularly the men, is excessive timidity; thus Chano, Gongyop and his son, Pembu, Jiroong and Nahyeun were all timid to a point where this timidity became an active disability. The Lepcha ideal calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility, but it does call for it, and these people gave the impression of being permanently fixed in the dependent stage. Thus Pembu, who should have been running his own household, was almost entirely dependent on his mother for advice and help, Jiroong on his wife. Others fall short of the Lepcha ideal personality by lack of intelligence or industry; among these were Katel, Dunbi, Ashyok, and Aga. Of these Dunbi was temperamentally lazy and the other three were foolish and incompetent by the standards of the culture. Tobgé, and to a lesser extent Dadool, exceeded the Lepcha bounds of irresponsibility and licentiousness permitted to young men.

Among the younger men Rigya, who was born in 1915, to a certain extent aided and abetted by his adoptive elder brother Nariya, was unique in being an active miser. He was always shabbily dressed, and unlike all the other Lepchas, never made us presents, though he spent a great deal of time hanging round us, gaping at our possessions, and asking for presents; he had particularly a magpie desire for illustrated papers, and was always asking for pictures of war 'because he had never seen anything like them and was amazed'. He was given quite a number of papers, but one day I told him he could not have any more because other people wanted them. (One of the very few times I saw a
[152] Lepcha boy cry was on one occasion when two mothers each accompanied with sons about eight years old came up for medicine; one of the boys asked for a paper and I gave it to him and went on dressing the cut; the mother of the other child asked rather timidly if I had not a paper for her boy as well, and I then saw this latter holding his mother's hand, with tears streaming down his face; he was crying hard but so quietly that I had not realised it though I was a couple of yards away.) A couple of days after I had refused to give Rigya any more papers he arrived early one morning to repeat his demand, bringing with him as a present the smallest

[6] See Appendix III, b.

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Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)

Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[Facing p. 368]

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157 bottle of milk I ever received; he appeared astounded at his own
x 159 generosity. I asked him whence he had got the milk, for I thought he had no cattle, and then, when I showed that I considered him one of the poorer people of Lingthem, his pride overcame his reticence, and he confided his great secret to me. I do not think that any Lepcha in Lingthem outside his household knew of his secret savings and ambitions. I naturally could not refer to them openly, but I made several hints when talking to other Lepchas; these hints were never taken up.

x 159 Rigya was the middle son of Ashyok *youmi*, but was given as a child to Ashyok's elder brother, who had only one son, Nariya, ten years older than Rigya, and who seemed unlikely to have another. At that period Nariya's father was the richest man in Lingthem, whereas Ashyok, who had two other sons, was relatively poor. Since the death of Nariya's father, Rigya calls Nariya 'father'. This is the story he told me.

'When I was a baby I didn't distinguish between my adopting parents and my real parents; as soon as I knew who were my real parents I tried to run away to them; but they beat me and sent me back. I love my real parents best, especially my mother; they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them. But I loved my other mother and father too; they gave me food and rice and meat. Now I love my wife best after my parents, but I used not to.

'When I was a child I was very frightened of devils, especially Tongryong *moong*, who is like a tiger and runs after and kills people. I was also frightened of houses where people had died and of burial places and used to run away from them; indeed I did this till last year, but now I am grown up so I don't run away any longer. Even today I'm frightened of Jamfi *moong* and Mitoor (a dog-shaped devil) when I'm in the forests or high mountains. I'm frightened too of people if I've told them a lie, or said evil about them or done them wrong; but I've never done anything really wrong like sleeping with another man's wife. I've seen a lot of corpses but I've never been frightened of them.

'I didn't sleep with girls when I was young because my father and mother had told me it was very wrong to sleep with other men's wives; they promised me that they would *asék* me as soon as I was big enough. But one day when I was fifteen a girl from Lungdeung came to stop here and she said to me, "Let us sleep together", so I did and I liked it, and we did it again six or seven days later.

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X/159 She was the same year as me; it was my first time but I don't think it was hers. Afterwards my parents wanted to *aśék* her but she was already bespoke. Next I was *aśék* to another girl, but we didn't get on together and later the Mandal arranged for the *aśék* to be broken. Finally I was *aśék* to my present wife.[7] For the first two or three years we used to dislike one another very much; when she saw me she used to exclaim: "May this boy die young!" This always happens when the parents arrange a marriage between two people who don't know one another. Even when she came to live with me we slept apart at first; I tried to copulate with her but she pushed me away, and I was afraid to use force because she might beat me. But everybody gave her advice and presents—money and clothes and jewels—my parents and the Mandal and the other women in the village. At first we couldn't even look at one another, but now we're friendly; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me, and I love her and think in my belly "This is my wife," and I am pleased.

X/159 556 'Nariya's father was the richest man in the neighbourhood—richer than the Mandal—but much money was lost over a lawsuit concerning Nariya's first wife, the girl from Lingmu. The girl was a wicked girl who slept with everybody; and when she ran away she stole Rs. 150 in cash as well as taking her clothes and jewels; and her father borrowed Rs. 120 from Nariya's father and never paid it back. Besides these losses the lawsuit cost Nariya and the girl's father Rs. 200 each. Before that time he had had sixty head of cattle; the girl ruined him. The girl when alone used to live on the fat of the land, killing hens, and so on, for herself.

'Nariya's cardamum amounts to 15 maunds, mine to 20, and my wife's to 5 maunds. Nariya has eleven oxen, I five, and my wife none. Many oxen were killed because no less than seven people died in the house, and an ox was killed for each *sanglion* and also for the memorial feast a year later. Also my marriage cost three oxen; one was given for *aśék*, instead of the two pigs, and two at the marriage. It is good to have plenty of cattle because then for ceremonies and so on you are completely independent and do not have to borrow; also you can sell butter to the kanya at Mangan who pay from Rs –/8 to Rs. 1 for 2 lbs.

'None of us owe a penny to the kanya, nor indeed except for some meat from neighbours, an anna to anybody else. We are

[7] Who had been formerly *aśék*'d to his two brothers. See Chapter Six, p. 157.

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all three saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the kanya and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.'

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ii

An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls.

159X 732 [828]

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

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does not do his share of the work; he leaves immediately he has got what he wanted. He is unsettled and unco-operative; there is nothing good to be said of him, and no excuses to be made for him, for he does not attempt to do as much as he could. It is said that he suffers from genital infantilism and fimosis; if he wanted to marry he would not be able to find a wife, but he does not want to. Since his parents' death he lives with his uncle, Thyak Thimbu; but he finds him very unsatisfactory for he is always going away.

This instability and wandering are also the chief symptoms of Asang's idiot son and Kanden. Since I saw quite a lot of Kanden and very little of the other I propose to describe Kanden; the medical histories of the two young men are almost identical.

Kanden was born in 1912, the middle of three brothers, but the elder boy died in infancy. When Kanden was about two years old his mother died and his father ran away with another woman; for five years Kanden was brought up by his 'aunt', Lumba's first wife. According to his father and to all the neighbours, Kanden was quite a normal boy as a child and up to the age of thirteen; until that age he was a good and sensible boy and worked properly and well. When his horoscope was cast at birth it was found that he was the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama, but when he went to Lumba to study he could not learn and got duller and duller until he was forced to give up the study. From that time he has suffered from wandering fits; sometimes just as he is going to eat he will get up without saying a word and go away for three, five, or seven days. During these fits he does not speak; and it seems as though he recognises nobody. He just wanders about sleeping and eating anywhere. Were he to steal or do anything wrong his parents would be held responsible, but in point of fact he does not do so. This state is caused by a supernatural called Kyon-rek; no exorcism is efficacious; the boy will get worse and worse till he dies an early death. There is no general reason for boys getting into this state (according to Tafoor, in Kanden's case it is the result of going against his destiny to be a lama); in a large (extended) family there is likely to be one wanderer. Besides Asang's son Dunbi's younger brother, now dead, was also a wanderer.

Most of the statements about Kanden given above were made by his father. Some weeks after I had got this information Kanden came up to gather firewood in company with Chimpet and I had a talk with him. It was not in any way a formal interview; we were all sitting together on the stones outside the monastery; there were

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betel nut and cigarettes provided. Chimpet did a great deal of the talking; he was always a rather irrepressible little boy, and on this occasion he was bubbling over with jokes and dirty remarks more than usual. A great number of the remarks made by Kanden arose out of Chimpet's statements. My interpreter was present, but everybody was completely used to him by that time. A lot of the talk was fairly meaningless jokes; I asked Kanden the type questions which it was known I asked everybody; what his earliest memories were; who his relations were and if he liked them; what his first sexual experience was; what his ambition was; what private property he had; whether he had heard or seen devils. I was particularly trying to find out about his wanderings and led the conversation back to them whenever I could without stressing the point. The only subject I tried to elaborate were his relations with Pichi, after he had emphatically stated that he preferred him to anybody else. I was very anxious not to frighten him and therefore did not ask any searching questions or insist on any subject for which he showed distaste. As far as I could judge the atmosphere was friendly and indeed frivolous.

Since I know of no other record of a primitive mental defective I propose to insert *verbatim* the notes which I made immediately after the interview, in order that, if possible, other people may be able to make a diagnosis.

'April 30th. Kanden came up to gather firewood this morning and I was able to talk to him for a couple of hours. He is twenty-five, heavy featured, and thick-lipped with rather more black hairs on the legs than the other Lepchas of his age. He sits on the whole very still, gesturing with one arm from the elbow, except when he is embarrassed, when he fidgets with a twig on the ground. He is of obviously low vitality.

'On the whole he speaks quite rationally; he can answer questions about relationship and so on consequentially. He speaks slowly and is rather liable to drop his voice to a confidential whisper. He has rather a foolish laugh and never laughed spontaneously, but when anybody else did he joined in a good deal. Chimpet was present, usually making obscene remarks which Kanden thought funny. Chimpet is more than ten years his junior, but he treated him as if they were of an age, whispering to him after he had gone away for a little "Did you kill a bird?" and reproving him as *tané* when he confessed to having had sexual experience.

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'Kanden knows his own story apparently from telling, for he says he has no memory of the time before he was about Chimpet's age. His mother died when he was about two and he was taken and looked after by Lumba, who is a sort of maternal uncle and who at that time had no sons. When he was big enough to carry a water bamboo (that is about five) his father ran away to Darjeeling. Dadool, his younger brother, was looked after by his father's elder brother, now dead, and his wife. When his father returned—that is when the boy was about ten—he took him back. A couple of years after that he went to an old *omzet*, now dead, to study to be a lama;[8] but he had to give it up as he had no time to study—there was all the *work* in the house and the fields. He would have liked to have learnt.

'Shortly after this his compulsive wanderings began. He would suddenly feel that he did not like his parents and that he had got to go away to *work* for others. He would go to somebody else's house—usually a relation—Songpo is an "uncle" and the Mandal's third wife an "elder sister"—and help them in their *work*, staying two, three, five or seven days before returning home. When he was a young boy his father used to send him to help his relations with their *work* and sometimes he used to feel he had to go home. He speaks with embarrassment and some giggling of these wanderings and in a low voice, but he answers quite sensibly. The feeling comes over him irresistibly; it is not accompanied by any sense delusions. He knows his parents and so on, but does not, then, want to have anything to do with them. He "just thinks he wants to go and help others with their *work*. As long as he helps others with their *work* others will help him. He goes to their house and it becomes late and he stops there."

'He is happiest of all working in the fields or gathering firewood or in the house. The happiest time of his life was as a boy. He does not want to get older and die. He is not married, does not want to marry, has never seen a woman he would like to marry, has never copulated, and never gets erections.[9] At marriages and feasts boys and girls get together and copulate, but he never does nor has done. As a boy he used to talk and joke with the girls but never anything more.

'He does not like his stepmother; she feeds him all right and

[8] His father said his teacher was Lumba: I do not know who is correct.

[9] Datoop says that Kanden did sleep with Asang's wife, but she now won't have him, and nobody else likes him as he is a fool.

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does not hit him but she scolds; not only him but also his brother and father. He not only does not like her as well as his real mother (whom he obviously never knew) but prefers Lumba's first wife. Indeed he does not like women at all; when he helps people with their *work* he always helps men, usually either old men or boys. His great friend whom he calls *ingzong* is Pichi, the son of Datoop; he loves him very much, more than his brother. I do not think, however, there is any question of a homosexual attachment here; he says they never put their arms round one another's shoulders; and when I asked if he thought it would be nice, since they were both unmarried, to set up house together and live alone, he replied without enthusiasm that (*a*) The parents would not allow it, and (*b*) Pichi would refuse. They just help one another in their *work*.[10]

'He never wanders far, he says, nor goes into the forest. He just goes to other people's houses to help them.

'He has never seen a devil, but has heard some and been frightened. These devils are Ingbong *moong* and Numeen *moong* who cry like babies and Bamoo *moong* who cries like an old woman and is a sort of banshee predicting death. He heard her once crying by a stream one day when he was lying at home in bed. He has also heard Zombu *moong* which is the devil which causes death, and which can be heard on the day of burial and also on the anniversary of the death. None of these devils have ever spoken. He has also dreamt of lamas and bejewelled women who indicate the presence of Lungzi-chen *moong*. There is nothing in any way exceptional about hearing these devils; many others have said they have heard them and Chimpet said he had heard and been frightened of Zombu *moong*.

'He says he has two or three oxen and two or three pigs as his own private property, but his parents look after them and feed them. He buys his own clothes out of the produce of his own cardamum fields. I could not make out whether the rice terraces near the Mandal's house belonged to him or to his parents; I think the latter. He speaks eagerly of work in the fields. The dry rice is sown, but so far neither the millet nor wet rice. He gives all his money and goods to his parents; if he were married he would have separate property, but as things are he has nothing separate or secret from his father. He is fond of his father, likes him better than Lumba.

[10] Pichi said later that he and Kanden are no longer friends; they used to live near each other and work together; now he is no longer friendly with him. Pichi also said that when he is not wandering he is a good worker.

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'He would like to be wealthy and have lots of good food and clothes. He thinks he would like to go to live at Gangtok where he has been three or four or five times. (Numbers always confuse him; in any question demanding a numerical answer he always gives a number of alternatives—an exaggeration of a cultural trait.)

'The first time he wandered away he went to his uncle Songpo; he "thought he would be angry if he did not go and help them with their *work*." He still thinks that he has to go and help people or they will be angry.

'When he asked Chimpet if he had killed a bird he first of all denied having done so himself and then said that he had killed no big animal but has caught birds in snares. He showed little interest in this; did not care if the birds were caught alive or dead; apparently of no emotional importance.

'All through the interview—I reverted to the subject of his wanderings several times, but never stressed it—there came up the obsessive connection between wandering and helping others with their *work*. "I go away to help others clean the ground and sow and then it gets dark and I stay there. As long as I help others others will help me." His aversion to sex also came up several times. It is worth noting that Kanden exceptionally had no *oongop* to educate him sexually. It is possible that such a relation might have quieted his fear of women. Of course there are a number of women with whom he had a theoretical right to sleep, but none who were in a position to make a direct approach.'

I have given this interview at such length because it seems to me to raise a problem of particular interest. As far as I can tell from this interview with Kanden, from casual contacts with Asang's idiot son, and from the description of other wanderers given by Lepchas, there would appear to be considerable parallels between the Lepcha wanderers and the schizophrenics of our own culture. The parallels between 'wandering' and schizophrenia appear to me to be the following: the symptoms nearly always declare themselves in the second decade of life, after an apparently normal childhood; there are some physical abnormalities—the excess of body hair and a certain thickening of the features; there is the low or absent sexual impulse; there is the relative immobility and the very confidential voice. On the other hand what is for the Lepchas the most significant feature of all is the motiveless wandering, which has more obvious resemblance to a compulsion neurosis than to schizophrenia.

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Also there do not seem to be any hallucinations (the hearing of devils cannot be so classified, as it is part of the expected behaviour of every child), nor, save during the wandering fits, any change of emotional attitude towards the members of the immediate family. 159x 732 158

It seems to me possible that the forms of insanity clinically recognised are culturally determined; and in that case the state of affairs which in Occidental societies would produce either schizophrenia or compulsion neurosis, among the Lepchas produces the various syndromes of which the wandering is the most obvious feature. In the case of Kanden it is noteworthy that the cultural stress on co-operation has produced what would appear to be a feeling of neurotic anxiety so strong that it interferes with the individual's proper performance of his own work. This suggestion of the cultural determination of the symptoms of insanity is inevitably completely tentative, since I know of no other records of definitely abnormal types in non-European cultures.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LIFE OF KURMA

i

121 When I went to investigate the Lepchas one of the chief objects that I set myself was the collection, if it should prove possible, of the life history of one or more individuals. This seemed to me desirable for a number of reasons. It should be axiomatic that all sociology is based on the dialectical opposites of the society and the individual, and that any study which neglects either pole is thereby incomplete. Unfortunately, owing to the elaboration and specialisation of the distinct disciplines there has been very little contact between the psychologist studying the individual and the sociologist and anthropologist studying the group; the psychologist tends to treat the individual as though he lived in a vacuum, shared perhaps by his parents and immediate family, and they act as though the particular society of which the individual is a member were 'human nature' or 'natural circumstances'; they tend to ignore almost completely the cultural conditioning to which the individual, as a member of his society, has inevitably been subjected.[1] The sociologist and anthropologist on the other hand tend to ignore the individual as such, though they naturally pay attention to the special social functions of certain individuals placed by the society in conspicuous positions. Apart from these individuals of outstanding position, the mass of the population is classified into groups, usually according to one single aspect of the individual—their economic position, their religious beliefs, their type of work, their

[1] A notable exception must be made for the work of Dr. Margaret Mead and that of Dr. John Dollard of the Institute of Human Relations of Yale University. His two books—*Criteria for the Life History* and *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*—combine very significantly the study of the individual and his society. I should like to reiterate my very great debt to Dr. Dollard, for it was through his books and conversation that my attention was focussed on this particular problem.

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121 age or sex, and various other criteria. The working of the society is, as it were, studied from above and as objectively as possible. This non-participating attitude is undoubtedly necessary to get a complete view of the society in all its functions and ramifications; but if the study stops there it is impossible to interpret from such data the effect which the organisations studied have on the individuals who have to work them. We may learn a great deal about a given culture without having any estimate as to the results this culture has on its component parts, or the subjective importance of these parts to the individual. To give an over-simple example, any study of English life would have to devote considerable space to the very elaborate organisation and beliefs of the Church of England; it might also notice, though naturally more briefly, the value placed on a dirt-free epidermis and correctly buttoned garments. But no objective view could show how many people would prefer the close company of a professed atheist to a person who had patently not washed in the last fortnight, or whether an individual would be more discomfited by missing evensong or by entering a crowded room with all his trouser buttons undone. A good deal of interpretation is possible, especially in small communities, by intelligent observation and deduction, but such interpretation, however carefully documented, can always be suspected of misplaced emphasis and perhaps personal bias.[2] These objections inevitably disappear in an avowedly subjective autobiography of a member of the society. The individual telling his own story may be an exceptional one, but the emphasis and stresses are untouched by the preoccupations of the ethnographer.

A second advantage of the life history is that it is liable to give information on points which would otherwise be inevitably unobservable. Thus among the Lepchas it would be quite impossible for any stranger to observe the almost constant nagging in which women seem to indulge in the privacy of the family, for such nagging is immediately stopped in the presence of any stranger. I should have considered the women as apparently peaceful and contented as the men, did not this family nagging recur so frequently in people's autobiographies. Similarly the psychological importance

[2] It may be considered that I have exaggerated the use of the first person singular in this book. I think it preferable to allow my own bias to show openly and thereby be accounted for, than to pretend to the inevitably unobtainable attitude of Olympian objectivity. The ethnographer is as much part of the society he is studying (albeit only temporarily) as any other member.

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of food would be almost impossible to estimate, if it were not for the fact that it is the central theme of so many individual memories. One of the chief justifications of the collection of life histories is given by the experience of my friend Mr. R. F. Barton,[3] who, on his third visit to the Ifugao, discovered through a life history a group of family gods with special observances of whose existence fifteen years life among the Ifugao with two long periods of objective investigation had given him no clue. 121

A third advantage of the life history, to my mind—though this point is of less immediate impact on sociology—is that it is a valuable corrective. There is at present a very obvious tendency in political and sociological thinking to ignore the individual in favour of his political or social functions; this dehumanising of social thought seems to me not only undesirable but also extremely dangerous; a great deal of the misery and distress in the contemporary scene appears to me to derive directly from the habit of thinking of people in groups instead of as individuals.

ii

Since I wished if possible to collect a life history, and since for various personal reasons my stay outside Europe could not be overlong, I was very lucky in finding in the Lepchas a society with a relatively unelaborated culture (outside the sphere of religion), and moreover one which was in no way fractionalised and of which no portion was guarded as a secret from the rest of the community. The energy which in other societies might have had to be directed to the discovery of magic or secret rites and initiations I was able to divert to the establishment of personal contacts. Moreover my preliminary study of the language in British India had given me a working knowledge of most of the formal arrangements of the society, such as the kinship terms and marriage arrangements, so that after the first month I was able to devote a considerable amount of my time to the non-formalised aspects of the culture and to try to get life histories. 124

Now to learn the story of another's life it is obviously necessary that the person who is telling his story should tell it willingly and have confidence in his listener; otherwise you will inevitably get lies and evasions. Here, too, I was served by the Lepchas' tendency

[3] Author of *Ifugao Law and Customs*, *The Rising Sun*, etc.

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124 to monologue, to recount anecdotes, to illustrate a theme by their own past experiences. I soon noticed that Kurma had a particular tendency to do this, and also that he was flattered by my obvious interest in what he had to say. After we had been in fairly continuous contact for about a month I asked him to tell me what he remembered of his childhood. He did so willingly, and thereafter it was easy to bring him back to the subject of his own past life by asking a single leading question. 'What happened after you did so-and-so?' 'What happened to so-and-so?' While he was telling his story I asked practically no questions at all; I kept all queries for subsequent meetings when impersonal subjects would be discussed, when I would interject them without apparent emphasis. Altogether about six full days were passed mainly in the discussion of Kurma's own life; I should undoubtedly have had more material if he had not first been summoned to visit his parents-in-law and on his return been taken ill with fever. Besides these special sessions Kurma would often introduce apposite anecdotes of his own past life, both before and after I had started getting his story.

With Kurma, more than with any other individual in Lingthem we managed to set up a pattern of mutual obligations. As *gyapön* he had been charged by the Mandal to look after us, especially in the matter of getting provisions; he enjoyed the reflected importance of his contact with Europeans, and I flattered him by appealing to him somewhat more often than was necessary. He was anyhow more disposed to talk than to work and was very amenable to cajolery.

I did not like Kurma very much and had not very full confidence in him. I repeatedly tried to trip him up by asking him identical questions at considerable intervals of time, and to check up on him by questioning other people. Actually my distrust was practically unfounded; only on one major point—the death of Banyok—did I find him completely incorrect, and at a later date he voluntarily retracted his first version.

Both through temperament and circumstances Kurma was an [157] a-typical Lepcha. In temperament he had an unusual desire for power, was boastful, and had decided sadistic traits. Sociotically he was unfortunately circumstanced and his treatment of his circumstances was unusual. His mother appears to have been exceptionally 124 poor and his adopting parents exceptionally unkind. Adoption is 547 of itself statistically rare—only eleven people out of the 176 in

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Lingthem were or had been adopted; and Kurma is unique in 124
having completely abandoned his adopting parents to return to his [597]
biological parents. Again as a person with two elder brothers Kurma is unusual in having become head of the household at an early age and in having had the heavy economic burden of seven funerals in a fairly short stretch of time.[4] He is also unusual in having started with an irregular sexual union, and extremely unfortunate in the mortality of his wives.

Nevertheless, despite his unusual character and circumstances, I believe that Kurma's life-story, incomplete though it is, gives a good illustration of the dynamic workings of Lepcha culture and an adequate cross-section view of Lepcha society. By developing the themes which he touches on,[5] sometimes very cursorily, one would have an almost complete picture of Lepcha social arrangements; if it were not for the awkwardness of such an arrangement, all the preceding chapters of this book could be used as amplification for Kurma's story.

I am giving the notes in the form in which I took them. The por- 128
tions in quotation marks are nearly *verbatim* transcriptions; I could not, however, always write quickly enough to take down every word, and I have omitted the repetitions which swell out all Lepcha stories. The portions told in the third person are chiefly incidents which cropped up in the discussion of other matters.

Although I have not altered the notes in any way I am presenting them in more or less historical order, which is not that in which the information was given to me. To simplify reading I am giving cross-headings, and a few explanatory notes. For those points in his narrative on which I questioned other people and on which their versions differed considerably from Kurma's I have presented the alternative versions in brackets and italics. For ease of reference I am also giving overleaf a calendar of the more or less well-established dates in Kurma's life and the names and dates of birth and death of his immediate family. To bring his story up to date I have put after his narrative a journal of his doings during the period when I was observing him.

[4] The only people in Lingthem similarly circumstanced were Nariya and Rigya, and they were economically far better able to stand the strain.

[5] I have omitted in the following pages all the impersonal material (ceremonies, etc.) which Kurma incorporated in his story.

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DATES IN KURMA'S LIFE

1900	Birth.
1903	Death of father.
1904?	Adopted by Passo and wife.
1907?	Death of Banyok.
1910	Possesion by Padem spirit.
1916	Returns home for good.
1917	Suicide of elder brother Ahyok.
1918	Meets Yangma, elder sister of Gongyop.
1919–1923	Lives with Yangma in Lingthem. Illness.
1924	Death of stepfather, Chenyak. Kurma returns to Lik-lyang and *asék*'s his first wife.
1931	Death of first wife.
1932	Comes to second wife at Lingthem as *komok myok*.
1933 spring	Death of mother at Lungdeum.
1933 autumn	Birth of elder daughter.
1934? spring	Death of younger brother Samboop.
1934	Birth of younger daughter.
1934 autumn	Death of elder daughter.
1934 autumn	Becomes *gyapõn* for three years.
1935 March	Death of second wife.
1936 April	Becomes *asék* to third wife.
1936 September	Birth of son.
? 1938 harvest	Projected third marriage.

Kurma's family

Kurma's father died 1903; exact age unknown, but was a young man.
Kurma's mother was a Mun. Born 1864. Died 1931.
Kurma's stepfather Chenyak was a lama. Born 1867. Died 1924.

Siblings: years of birth and approximate date of death.

*1. Nimu (girl).	Born 1889. Still living in Lungdeum: married, with children.
2. Ahyok (boy).	Born 1892. Committed suicide 1917.
3. Ajeummu (girl).	Born 1895. Died *c.* 1922. Mother of boy Takshyom, living with Kurma.
4. Banyok (boy).	Born 1896. Died *c.* 1907.
5. Kurma (boy).	Born 1900.
6. Samboop (boy).	Born 1903. Died ? 1934.
*7. Nurzé (girl).	Born ? 1909. Died ? 1915.

* *Note.* The eldest and youngest girls are both said to be bastards, the eldest born before the mother's marriage, and the latter after she was a widow. Kurma's mother claims that the father of Nimu was the second Dorjé Lapoon, the father of Nurzé, Pashet, a married man of Panung. Both men refused to acknowledge paternity, and in both cases the *ship-song* ceremony was performed by the brothers of Kurma's mother.

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PLATE 27

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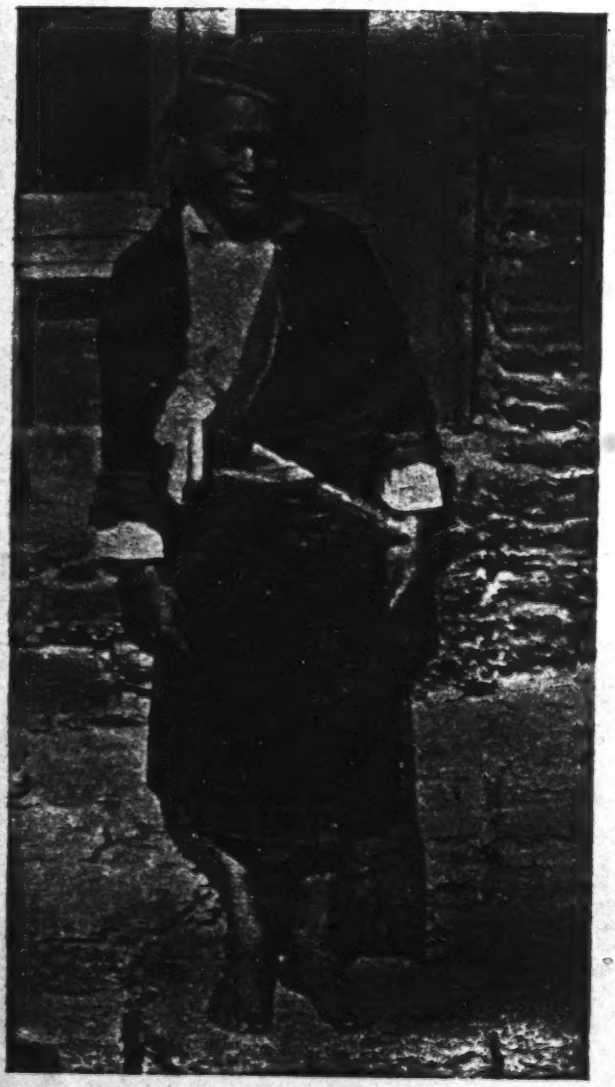

KURMA *GYAPÕN*

[facing p. 384]

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iii

X 159 *Earliest memories. Death of Father.* (*I believe there is considerable telescoping in these earliest memories.*)

Kurma's earliest memories date from when he was three years old. At the time he remembers only he and his brother Banyok were living at home; one brother and one sister were living with his maternal grandmother and the eldest sister was also away. His parents were very poor; they had only a one-room house and no goats or cattle; they lived at Panung, the next village over the hill. The earliest memories are all concerned with the death of his Father, which took place three months before the birth of his younger brother Samboop, and therefore presumably date from the middle of his third year.

'My first clear memory is of my Father popping corn; besides the four stones which make up the usual fireplace another large stone had been set up in front to keep the heat of the fire off Father. The firewood was put in from two sides only, instead of all round, on either side of the big stone: Father sat behind the stone popping the corn and I sat near him to get the popped corn. Mother was husking corn.

'This scene occurred three days before the marriage of a paternal-uncle-younger-than-father; I did not then know who he was and thought he was just a big man with short-cut grey hair. That day there was another marriage in the village and Mother went down to the marriage to drink *chi* and have a good time. Father asked her to bring him back a piece of liver from the ox which would be killed and divided up; one of Mother's brothers was *chanébu* (*i.e. the man who divides up the meat*) at this feast so Father had some chance of getting the portion he asked for. I and my elder brother peeped at the bridal party arriving, through the chinks in the bamboo walls. Mother went down to the feast in the evening.

'After popping the corn Father felt unwell and lay down, so that there was no evening meal. My elder brother slept on Father's right side and I on his left side. In the evening Father started breathing very noisily (*sound imitated*) so I climbed up on Father's body and asked him what was the matter but he didn't answer. My elder brother was sound asleep, but I woke him up and he got up and rekindled the fire; by its light we saw Father with his eyes wide

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X 159 open and the whites showing; but he would not speak and we were both very frightened and cried loudly.

'As it happens there was a house quite near and there was an old woman living there. All the other villagers had gone to the wedding. When this old woman had seen Mother going to the feast that afternoon she had reproached her saying "You should not leave your husband while he is so ill; you must return quickly and not stop and enjoy yourself." Well, this old woman heard us crying and came over to ask what was the matter? When she saw Father was on the point of death she went along to the *choten* which was near and stood on it and called down to Mother to come back. They were making so much noise at the wedding feast that she had to call three or four times. When Mother heard she hurried up with a piece of liver in her hands; but when she arrived Father was dead. On seeing this Mother burst into tears crying, "I am husbandless! On whom can I depend? Never was woman in an unhappier state than I am." As she said this she walked about clutching hold of different parts of the house. The old woman heaped up the fire.

'I thought Father was asleep and tried to go and lie down again beside him but Mother pulled me back saying "What are you trying to do? Your Father is dead." But neither at this time nor for some little time after did I understand what *hu mak* (*he is dead*) meant. Meanwhile the old woman tried to console Mother saying, "Don't cry, I will go and fetch your husband's brother," which she did and shortly returned with him. I did not know who he was. When the uncle came in he bent up the corpse's legs and I thought to myself "Why is this man treating my Father so?" Then the woman who later adopted me arrived. The three grown-ups consulted as to what was to be done and they decided that they must go and summon quietly the Tashé lama who was at the marriage feast. So Passo's wife went and did so. The body was lying on the ground with its head towards the wall; the lama sat at the feet and started performing the *po-thop* ceremony, reading from his book. I and my brother thought this very funny and laughed, whereupon the lama hooted at us making a very ghostly noise (*well reproduced*). He did this three times but we were not frightened and kept on laughing. Passo's wife scolded us and made us stop. When the lama had finished reading he went away and the paternal uncle put the corpse into a basket (*tangar*). Then I started crying and said "What are you putting my daddy in the *tangar* for? Whom

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will I sleep with now? I always sleep with daddy." And then I tried to get into the basket. My uncle said "You have not got a father any more; he is dead and turned into a devil." I did not know what he meant. 159K

'The next morning the uncle took up some planks from the floor; many people had come to the house. One man took some burning brands from the fireplace and went down through the hole, then the paternal uncle went down, and people behind handed him the corpse in the basket, and then others went through. Other people carried away Father's bow and arrows and bamboo arrow holder. The man with the firewood went first. I asked my brother "Why are they taking Father away like that?" but my brother either didn't know or would not say. I saw the people coming back from the burial; on the road before they reached the house somebody made a bonfire which everybody stepped over and somebody thrust a knife under the door also for people to step over. I do not remember anything more about that time except that Mother used to cry when she was alone. I did not understand what it was all about.

'At the *sanglion* all I remember is that the old Mun was a man whose left arm was broken so that it hung useless below the elbow; he held the knotted rope under his arm and cut it with the knife which he held in the other hand. As we were so poor we had no animals to sacrifice; the paternal uncle provided a goat and I remember seeing the meat skinned and cut up and Mother telling me I must not have any; this made me angry and I did not understand why.'

Birth of younger brother. Adoption.

'My next memory is being frightened of my baby brother crying. Mother told me not to go near him as he was a devil, Sang-rong *moong*. Some time before my elder sister was fetched from where she was stopping; I slept with Mother till she was delivered and afterwards with my sister.

'Some time later I and my brother and sister and Mother were all sitting on the verandah when Passo's wife arrived carrying a big bamboo full of water; she leant it against the fence and said to Mother "I'd like to have that boy to look after; please give him to me." Mother replied "I don't know if he wants to, but if he does you can fetch him and take him home with you." Then

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K 159 Passo's wife said to me "I am going to take you home with me and I will love you. I have got meat at home and boiled rice pudding (*tok-tok*); if you come I will give it to you." I said I did not want to go, so then she said "Let us go anyhow, you can eat it and after that you can come back." Then she took me to her house and gave me *tok-tok*. In the evening I wanted to go home but Passo's wife said to me "There is a devil Sang-rong *moong* in your house who will eat you if you go." I was not frightened of that and tried to get away but they fastened the door shut and would not let me go.

'When I was first adopted Passo and his wife loved me very much and fed me well but I was very unhappy and wanted to go back to Mother and used to run away to her sometimes (*they lived in the same village*). Sometimes Mother used to carry me on her back and sometimes I used to walk; once there was a heavy hail-storm and the hail fell all over me and Mother dragged me hard holding my arm at the shoulder which hurt me.'

Situation of Mother on death of Father.

Kurma's mother was a Mun. When her husband died she was left a very poor woman. The eldest girl, Nimu, the only one grown up, was married and she handed over most of the other children to strangers. This was not a regular adoption for no fee was paid for the children; they were given over to strangers to look after in exchange for their services. The other sister, Ajeunmu, had been given before the father's death to one of the father's brothers but she returned to her mother two years after the death of the father. Ahyok, the elder brother, was at home but was of little use to his mother; he used to spend all his time in the jungle going after birds and animals. Banyok was taken to be looked after by the Mandal, and Kurma by Passo, so the mother was alone with her eldest son and infant son and later her elder daughter. She had a brother Sangshim, who used to come and help her and give her presents from time to time, but she was chiefly dependent on her own efforts; and since she had nobody to cut down the weeds or sow the seed in the field, after the death of her husband she used to go out and work for neighbours, being paid in food with which she could feed her children.

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Childhood memories while living with Passo. (The following incident is almost the most vivid in Kurma's childhood and he volunteered it immediately after the account of his Father's death.) 159A

'One night when I was living at Passo's I dreamt that I was letting pass urine just a little at a time, which was very nice. When I woke up the bed was all wet even down to my legs. In the morning Passo's wife threw the wet cloth at my head and beat me and rubbed the wet cloth all over my body.[6]

'Another day I was at home while my adopting parents were working in the fields. I took the hens' eggs and broke them on a stone over the fire in the same way as I had seen Mother making buckwheat bread. I did not eat them; I thought I was being useful. When Passo and his wife returned and saw the eggs they beat me. Sometimes I was so frightened I used to run away and hide in the forest. I would come back at night and sit outside the house; I was too frightened to go in. After I had done this a few times Passo and his wife used not to speak when they wanted to punish me; they used to creep up quietly and catch hold of me and beat me. They used a big piece of firewood and beat my back so hard that "wind used to come up from my heart smelling of what I had eaten earlier."

'Another time Passo was stripping bamboos to make ropes; I was playing near and kicked the ropes, whereat Passo threw the knife at me cutting me deeply in the calf. (*He can still show the scar.*) Another time I stole something, whereupon they tied my hands together with a bundle of dried leaves and sticks and set fire to it; my hands were not burnt but I was very frightened and never stole afterwards.

'I used to sleep alone under a big bundle of *kacher* (*barley on the stalk*) and in the day-time I used to put my bedclothes on it. One day I pulled the bedclothes down and some small hairs from the barley entered one eye so that for seven months I could not see properly. Every evening a burning brand was buried in the ashes to keep alight all night and in the morning it was my business to light the fire; one morning after seven months some sparks flew into my eye. This hurt a great deal and I cried all day and rubbed my eyes. In the evening an old woman tried to cure me; she pulled my eye open and saw a small piece of grass sticking out of it; she took it out with the silver brooch which fastened her dress; some pus came out too and then I got better.'

[6] Kurma is punished for spoiling property.

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Kurma spies on the birth of Apot.

X159 'When I was about six or seven I spied on a neighbour giving birth to a baby. I did this by standing under the house floor which was made of crossed bamboo; I did it by myself out of curiosity because I wanted to know what an adult woman's vulva looked like, and to see how babies were born. The woman was hanging on to a rope from the ceiling and an older woman squatted behind her and held her breasts; the woman's belt was loosened and from below I had a very good view of her vulva. The woman was groaning and at each groan the vulva rounded and the head of the child could be seen; between groans the vulva was oblong. Finally after a discharge of yellow fluid the baby was born suddenly; and then the after-birth.' (*I put some questions to Kurma about this event; he said he recollected no feelings of disgust or fear; on the contrary, the spectacle was probably exciting. He excuses his conduct by saying he was too young to know shame.*)

Early sexual experience.

X159 864 'When I was eight or nine I used to ask the little girls of the neighbourhood to let me see and touch their vulvas; to which they would consent and then lie down. Nobody told me about sex; I knew naturally as everybody does; it is like eating. At the same time I only knew how to do it properly when at the age of ten I saw my elder brother, aged fifteen, lift a girl's legs in the forest. [833] My first sexual experience was when I was twelve, with a girl of the same age. We were both employed watching animals. I had seen older people and they had urged me to try the girl; she agreed but after one attempt would have no more to do with me. Pulling back the prepuce hurt.'

Practical joke played on Kurma.

X159 522 'When I was about ten I was sent to live in a field hut to scare away monkeys and other animals from the ripening grain; with me was a young married man, a relation of Passo's. We had grain and pumpkins to eat. The young man played the following trick on me; he told me to get a big leaf from the forest, which I did; then the young man shat on it and told me to fold it up carefully and carry it right away down to the river; I must not put it near a house or in a field. I did as I was told. This happened for

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three days; on the fourth day I said "It is only fair we should take it in turns; I will take yours to-day and you take mine to-morrow." On the morrow I brought a leaf and shat on it and told the other to take it away. He refused, whereupon I said "If you won't throw it away it will stay there." After some argument the other threw it away and did not play tricks on me again.' 159x 522

Relations with Mother.

'From time to time I used to go home and see Mother and help her and take her presents of the food and things I had saved at Passo's; they were rich, Mother was poor. Passo and his wife dressed me in second-hand clothes and gave me an old knife; they said I did not work well enough and cloth was too expensive to give me new clothes. 159x

'When I was with Passo I was treated very badly, I had to do all the chores and work and was given bad food and no *chi*[7] while they sat at ease and ate and drank all day. When I was eight I was so unhappy that I ran away to my Mother; but she beat me and sent me back to my adopting parents. I ran away again when I was fifteen; this time Mother kept me nine days and then sent me back with a present of a load of *chi*.'

Onset of Padem Rum.

'When I was ten I was sent by Passo together with Cherim and Sanam to my Mother's father to fetch buckwheat. I was meant to carry twenty measures but could only manage fifteen. The two elder men were given *chi* and rice but I was merely given buckwheat cake. On the way home the Padem attacked me; I could not see properly and felt as though my body were being poked with sticks; I kept on thinking of drinking *chi* and eating rice like my companions had. I managed to get home with the buckwheat. My adopting parents did not look any bigger than myself.' (*For three months he was ill with constant derangements of vision.*) 'A chilli looked as big as a melon, a pumpkin looked like an umbrella. At times I felt as though I was flying or sitting on trees, at times my body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs.

[7] Kurma used to get much more easily drunk than other Lepchas of his age, and I wonder whether this is due to the fact that he was not accustomed to *chi* in childhood. [273]

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X 159 My body ached so much that I could not move; I felt as though I were going to burst and all the time as if I was being poked with bones or sticks. Mother tried all the devils to appease them, uselessly; finally she saw that it was the Padem *rum* and she made a sacrifice of fish, bird, *chi*, a scarf and a rupee and a *chimi* and prayed "Nyou *rum*—god of our ancestors—do not harm my son; stay with him and help him and he will serve you." A month later I recovered and now I make sacrifice to the Padem twice a year.'

Birth of bastard sister.

Kurma's bastard sister, Nurzé, was born when he was seven or eight years old. The father was Pashet, but he refused to acknowledge her and his mother's brothers performed the *thip-song* ceremony. The baby was born with a big stomach and died at the age of five owing to the fact that Pashet had blown up a bladder when she was five months gone in the womb. Pot-belly and death is the inevitable *tamtoom* of this—death occuring in the year corresponding to the month of pregnancy at which this act is performed. Kurma thinks Pashet did this on purpose.

Death of Banyok. Kurma's first version.

Banyok was adopted by the Mandal,[8] who was, and is, without a son. The Mandal had some distant connections of the Aram Pandjet *ptso* called Kaloo and Tangdong who were jealous of the fact that the Mandal's property would go to the stranger although they had children themselves; therefore according to Kurma they gave Banyok poison in a dish of curds and buckwheat with the result that he died three months later in his mother's home. This poison was bought in the 'plains' in Darjeeling by Kaloo's grandfather; it is still in the possession of a relation, Shupak of Lungdeum.

X 159 754 After the death of the boy there was a general outcry that this woman Tangdong had poisoned him but she protested vehemently against it. However, others persisted in their accusations and eventually a lama came from Talung monastery to make them

[8] Kurma maintained on several occasions that this was proper adoption, but both the Mandal and other people denied that this was so. It is probable that as a pauper the child was brought up in the Mandal's house in exchange for his work in the same way as Satéo is today.

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swear a solemn oath. This ceremony took place down by the river and Salyung of Panung was the sacrificer. An altar was erected and a goat killed and its blood collected into a cup; then the lama summoned by name three devils from Talung and offered them *cherkem*. Tangdong again denied administering the poison, but all the old men present insisted on her guilt. Then the lama touched her forehead with an incense burner and said 'If you have poison may all your *ptso* be destroyed by these demons.' Then a Mun sacrificed, calling on all the devils who were created by Itpomu and dedicated the goat to them and then said to the suspected poisoners 'If you have poison may you die as this goat dies.' Then he sprinkled blood and *chi* on the ground and said 'If you have poison may you and yours dry up as this blood dries up on the ground.' Then he gave them blood and *chi* to drink and said 'If you have poison may you and yours all die of an issue of blood from the nose and mouth.'

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Since that date all the members of the *ptso* have died in this way; they have sores and their body is contracted in some sort of paralysis so that they crawl forward and double up and they have an issue of blood from their nose and mouth and then die. The only survivors are two lamas of whom Takal is one, and they perform annually the ceremony to keep off the devils, making an elaborate offering and explaining that they knew nothing of what had occurred at that time and were completely innocent; now that they have heard the story they are making these offerings. (*I did not believe this story at the time as I had already noted Kurma's constant preoccupation with violent death and the story seemed to me,* de facto, *improbable. I had already heard this story of the perjured poisoners, but as something which had taken place a good number of years ago and in another village. According to Tafoor over thirty years ago at Lungdeum when Tasso Nungyen was Mandal. I was rather unwell when Kurma told me this story and I left him in the middle of the morning; when I saw him about a week later I told him that I had been too unwell to write down what he had told me and asked him to tell me again. The second version is given below and is I think the true one. While he was telling his first version the greater part was overheard and confirmed by an old lama who made a speciality of making prayer-flags and by Mrs. Datoop; but they arrived after he had started and did not, I think, realise that Kurma was connecting the story of this ordeal with his own family; the story itself is one which is told very often.*)

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Death of Banyok. Kurma's second version.

Banyok died about 1907; Kurma's only memory of him is his being carried by his eldest brother, Ahyok, when he was almost all skin and bone. The swearing ceremony was done about a year later and he, Kurma, didn't see it but only heard about it; the death of his brother was not the precipitating cause though he seems to think it was involved in it. The poisoner, Tangdong, lived in Lingthem at a place a little below the monastery where there are orange trees today.

Kurma's mother's second marriage.

Some time round about 1910 the Mandal and his wife (*first wife, now dead*) arranged a marriage between Kurma's mother and a lama, Chenyak. This man had already been married once, having inherited his elder brother's wife. Thus it occurred that both his wives had been beyond the age of child-bearing. The Mandal advised him to marry Kurma's mother and the Mandal's wife performed the same office for the woman; whereupon the Mandal acted as *bek-bu* for the *asék* which consisted of a pig, a hen, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee, which were divided among the villagers of Panung where Kurma's mother lived, as she had no surviving family in the neighbourhood. There had been a man, the son of Kurma's father's elder brother, who should theoretically have married her as *oong-op* but the man did not fancy taking on the responsibility of a large family of infants, and since they lived under different Mandals there was no method of coercing him.

After Kurma's mother and Chenyak were married they first lived at Lingthem and then at the demand of the people of Liklyang —the small village across the river—who wished for their services as Mun and lama they transferred to that place. First of all the husband and wife went across the river and cleared the ground and built a hut; then they fetched to live with them Ahyok, Ajeunmu, who was married shortly after, and Samboop. This occurred when Kurma was about fifteen. Ajeunmu was married to a man living farther up the river who three years after the marriage developed leprosy, of which disease he and the other seven people in the house subsequently died. This is the last recorded case of leprosy in the neighbourhood. Her son Takshyom who is now nineteen years old, is living with Kurma as he has no other living relations. It is said of him that he is a bastard by an unknown father, but this is

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possibly a kind explanation to prevent his having the stigma of leprosy, which is believed to be an hereditary taint. Ajeunmu died about 1922. 159A

Reasons for ill-treatment by adopting parents.

'At first Passo and his wife treated me well but afterwards they were very unkind to me. My position was made very hard by the fact that, after I had been adopted, Passo's younger brother had two children, the elder of whom was Apot, and these children would have inherited if I had not been there and they and their parents were always telling me to my face that I was a usurping stranger and insulting me and quarrelling with me.'

Kurma's final return home.

'I finally decided to return home because my elder brother Ahyok said to me that as we were real brothers we should live and work together. I liked my elder brother and also my sister, my elder brother because when we worked together he told me what to do. My real reason for going home, however, was because I loved my Mother very much. However, she much preferred my youngest brother Samboop, and used to give him all the choice food and titbits while I and Ahyok were fed coarsely.

'She showed no pleasure when I came back but just said "If you have come back it is your own wish, do as you please." When I had run home earlier she had beaten me and sent me back. My stepfather was pleased and treated me as a real father; we used to work together like a real father and son. I was not so pleased with my Mother. She used to scold and abuse my stepfather and I used to advise her not to. She was disappointed because I had come back from my adopting parents where I would have had property. Mother loved and spoilt my younger brother but did not love me or my stepfather. On my first return Mother said "Why have you come? You must go back." Besides my stepfather my two brothers and my elder sister Ajeunmu were also there. When I came back I just went to work with my parents, taking what food Mother would give me. This was in April.

'After a month Passo's younger brothers Cherim and Chukup came to ask me to return. They were sent by Passo. When they came to me I was husking buckwheat. They were accompanied by the *gyapön* of Lik (the village Kurma was living in). I refused

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steadfastly to accompany them home and they then ordered me to take a grinding stone from Lik to Passo at Panung. A couple of days later I and my elder brother took the grinding stones over; my elder brother carried the top stone. We deposited them in a cattle shed without going near the house or seeing Passo. I hated him.' ('To-day he is blind,' *Kurma added exultingly when he told this story.*)

'A month later Passo came with Pashet to reclaim me. At that time the second Dorjé Lapoon was performing the *chéné* (ceremony) for the buckwheat harvest. Passo said to me "I have never done you wrong; come back with me." I replied "No; you have treated me badly; though you are my maternal uncle[9] and my adopting father you have used me ill." Passo said this was not true. I reminded him of the time long past when he had said to me "You need not stop here any longer; you can go away now. My younger brother has got a son Apot." I remembered too in my heart how when Apot was three or four Cherim his father had insulted me and had tried to drive me away. For all these reasons I refused to return with Passo.'

Suicide of elder brother, Ahyok.

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'About a year after I had returned home my elder brother, Ahyok, committed suicide. These are the reasons for it. We had two paternal uncles,[10] of whom at first only the elder was married and the younger one used to sleep with his wife: but the elder brother disliked this so he arranged and paid for the marriage of the younger brother. But this new bride did not like her husband; instead she fell in love with Ahyok and used to go to visit him and sleep with him.[11] Then the elder uncle reproached the younger,

[9] Kurma's paternal great-grandfather's mother and Passo's paternal great-grandfather were brother and sister.

[10] These uncles were actually Kurma's second cousins; their father was the elder brother of Kurma's father's father. There was a considerable difference of age between them.

[11] Both these situations are culturally allowed for. What was scandalous was the wife expressing obvious and open preference for somebody not her husband. From the time of Kurma's father's death the elder 'uncle' had been married and the younger brother sleeping with his wife and this had gone on perfectly peacefully. But then this first wife of the elder 'uncle' had died and he had then married the 'niece' of his first wife who was very considerably younger than her husband or her brother-in-law. It was for this girl that the quarrels between the brothers started.

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saying " Why don't you keep your wife in order? She is always 159x
going down shamelessly to your nephew's house." At this the two
uncles quarrelled and the younger one committed suicide by 762
taking poison. But this only started the trouble. The surviving uncle said to Ahyok " This death is your fault and you must pay all the expenses of the funeral ceremonies." Ahyok protested that it was not his fault; his aunt used to come to visit him; how was he responsible? and anyhow he had no money. But the uncle insisted and a meeting was held of the Mandal and *youmi*. To this meeting Ahyok went taking with him a pig, fifteen rupees and a load of *chi*. I stopped at home with my Mother. My brother admitted that he used to sleep with the woman and the meeting decided that he must pay for the funeral expenses and ignored his plea of poverty.

'Then my brother returned home and went up to the loft and took there the poison *took-ra-kyet nyung* which is used in hunting[12] and swallowed it. Then he came down and said " Those people say I must pay for what is not my fault; so I shall die." He came down in front of the house and walked about backwards and forwards. I asked him what was the matter and caught hold of him as he walked backwards and forwards. Then my brother drew his [412]
chimli (*a pointed knife which is worn in front of the body at the waist*) and cried " Come on! Come on! I will kill all who come near me." Then I caught hold of his right hand and Mother took the other; he made a lunge at my Mother and nearly killed her but I pulled him back in time. I finally managed to wrench the knife from his hand and then with my Mother's help pushed him on to the ground. I forced his mouth open and saw that his tongue was swelling and his hands were clenched; so I knew he had taken poison. I sent our younger brother to get the root of wild raspberry and hens' droppings; the root was pounded and mixed with the droppings and given him as an emetic, but it was too late and he died.'[13]

[12] 'People also wear a tiny quantity wrapped up in a thick cloth attached to their clothing near their heart as a protection against devils.'

[13] The fact of the suicide is independently confirmed by a great number of people though the reasons which caused it are somewhat different. Jiroong thought that he committed suicide because he was reproved for not working in the fields but instead going into the forest to look for wild tubers. Tafoor knew that the suicide was caused by the inability of some man to control his wife after he had been warned and thought Ahyok's suicide directly followed

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X/159 *First marriage.*

'My stepfather was the younger brother of Gongyop-bo (father of Gongyop). Gongyop's father had a daughter who had been married to Dunbi's elder brother by whom she had a son Shashoo. She was fourteen years older than me. When her husband died she refused to take Dunbi as *oong-op* as she did not like him and returned to live with her father. She came to visit her uncle, my stepfather, when I was eighteen; we loved one another and she stopped a year with me. But although she loved me she did not want to go and live at Lik; my family was poor and hers comparatively rich and she did not get on too well with my stepfather. So I went to live with her, spending the time between her and my home. The arrangement was made by the Mandal. My wife's brothers did not want to give their sister to a poor man and therefore would not accept the usual substitutes for the "bride price" and I had no money for the proper ceremonies. Besides myself and my wife and my stepson there were also living in the house Gongyop's father and mother and Gongyop and his wife and son. While I lived in that house I was treated like a brother. I had some property of my own at Lik and we all ate together in common. I was sorry that my wife would not go with me to my own home; this was because I had not paid for her.'

Illness.

'When I was about twenty-one I and my wife were living in the field house. One night at midnight I fell seriously ill. The next morning my wife and her son went to work in the fields while I lay on the floor feeling suffocated so that I could hardly breathe. I called my wife but she did not come. Then I started getting delirious and I am not quite sure whether in fact or not I saw the Lharibu Chujen come and talk to me. A little time before I had bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong for four rupees and it was hanging by a string over my head. When I saw the Lharibu I asked him "Where are you going? I am very ill." The Lharibu said "I have come to ask you how much you paid for that earring from Jiroong?" "Four rupees." "That is quite a fair price" he

[762] the suicide of the husband. These different views do not seem to me to invalidate Kurma's story in any way. The event took place nearly twenty years ago on the other side of the river.

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said and went away. Then I thought I saw people peering at me through the doorway; they were hideous people with goitres and other deformities and they were standing on each other's backs. They all pointed at me with their fingers and said "From a needle he has grown into a bodkin." I was frightened and called for my wife.' (*All this was imitated in pantomime: it is a very vivid memory.*) 'Then I thought the roof of the field house was bending down to crush me and I tried to get to the door. When my wife and stepson arrived they first of all thought I was dead; they called the Nandjému who came and burnt incense. Then Tinkep's stepfather tried to carry me on his back to the house but he was not strong enough and had to bring me back to the shed where I spent the night. The next day I was got back to the house by my wife, who was helped by two other men. I turned bright yellow and my excreta were yellow; I was ill for a very long time. My wife's name was Yangma.'

Death of stepfather. Removal to Lik.

My stepfather died in 1924. Before he died he had been made *ké-tsop*[14] of a neighbour called Chézé who had cardamum fields which passed to my stepfather and then to me. When my Mother was left alone with only a young son the Mandal told me I should go and live with my Mother, so I went there with my wife. Only then did I do *asék*. I bought a pig from Tikan for two maunds of cardamum and also took three rupees, a scarf and a rupee and a brass plate and jug. Tikan went with me as my friend and the Mandal acted as *bek-bu*. I did not do any other ceremony.' (*This wife died in* 1931. *Kurma still calls Gongyop ongzong and they are very friendly.*)

'The burial of my stepfather who was a lama was very expensive. For the *chongbu lu* ceremony a new cloth is necessary and also a carpet for the lama to sit upon and both of these will be taken away by the lamas as well as the bamboo container which has a rupee in it and is filled with grain. This costs at least fifteen rupees. During the years I lived in Lik I had to help pay for the funeral ceremonies of seven people—Ahyok, Ajeunmu who died at home though she had married away, my stepfather, my Mother, my first wife, Samboop and his wife.'

[14] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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X159 *Amputation of 'ingzong'.*

752 'At Lik I had an "*ingzong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

X159 When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not 839 get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur [522] attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[158] [15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

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that given the opportunity he would do the same again; but now that he is *gyapōn* and consequently in a position of some influence he has to be more circumspect.

Purchase of Boom.

'When I was at Lik I was quite prosperous, and I gave the proceeds of five maunds of cardamum, which was then 180 rupees, to buy the sacred book Boom. All the big people in the village had it in their houses and I wanted to have it too to show that I was prosperous. This book has to be read five times a year. As I cannot read I had to hire lamas to do so. I learnt to write Tibetan letters by being present during three lessons which were given to a boy who was studying to be a lama, but I cannot read.'

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Betrothal of Samboop and death of first wife.

'I had to act as father for Samboop and provide his marriage for him. I did this in 1930. I did not provide the marriage ceremony but my younger brother's wife came to live with him after *asék*.

'My first wife died in the autumn of 1931 and as soon as the memorial service was finished I came to live with my second wife at Lingthem. I came as *komokmyok* and for *asék* I only brought two maunds of millet which I bought in Mangan and killed a hen. My wife had a cow which was big with calf; we exchanged it for another one which was past milking which belonged to Tafoor, as we had to kill an ox for the wedding feast and it would be wasteful to kill a pregnant animal. I had made my wife pregnant before I *asék*'d her. I do not believe in horoscopes; my penis is more reliable than the books. When I went to live in my wife's house I gave the old house to my brother but I reserved some of the fields for my own use. My first child was born six months after the *asék*.'

Death of Mother.

'After I had married my Mother came and lived with me and my new wife for a little time; then she went back to live with my younger brother at her home in Lik; from there she was summoned to Lungdeum by Nimu to help look after a baby. She died in the beginning of 1933.'

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Death of the younger brother Samboop.[16]

X159 'Samboop was living in the house at Lik with his wife Gadung who was the younger sister of Nimu's husband. I had given him the Boom. In the spring I was over in Lik to sow millet in the half of the field I had reserved for my own use; Samboop had already sown dry rice there. While I was working in the field three men came up: they were Passeu who was the husband of my eldest sister, Passeu's younger brother Kachikbu and their brother-in-law Rumdo. First of all they asked me why I was over in Lik seeing that I was already settled in Lingthem? I replied that I had come over to work to sow the grain. I had been with Samboop in his house; then Samboop had gone into the forest and I had come to sow grain after leaving him. They then asked "Where is uncle Nangtap (which is another name for Samboop)?" "Why do you ask?" I said. They said "He must give *chi* to the Dorjé Lapoon when he comes; it is his turn." The second Dorjé Lapoon was at that time living with Kangbo and was performing the ceremony of stopping hail; everybody had to feast him in turn. I said that I and my brother had made *chi* in my house where we were keeping it; there was none in the house at Lik. The strangers then said that they must find Samboop; they also said that they were going to Mangan. I said I did not know where my brother was but my sister-in-law was working in the fields near the house.

'In the afternoon Kachikbu[17] came up to me and lay down; at the time I was burning weeds to clear the ground. I asked him why he had not gone to Mangan to buy rice as he had said? He replied that the bridge was impassable. I then asked what was the matter with him seeing that he had been all right in the morning? He said he was trembling and felt as if he had fever. He had a metal cigarette tin which had been given him by a European. He said that he had not seen Samboop.

[16] I noted at the time: 'I do not know how much to believe of this story. Kurma started by saying he would not talk about it as he had promised the Mandal not to mention it ever; then in hinting at it all the details came out; when he had finished he was abashed and repeated that he had sworn to the Mandal never to speak of this; this self-reproach seemed definitely sincere. At the same time the other records show that Kurma plays willingly with the ideas of death from violence. I think the facts are as recorded; what is perhaps untrue is the cause of his brother's death.'

[17] Kurma said that he and his mother possessed poison; but then he says that of everybody he dislikes.

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'I learnt later from my sister-in-law that when the strangers had asked where Samboop was, and she had said that he had gone into the forest, they followed him. The next morning Samboop's body was found at the foot of a cliff and his belt and clothes scattered on the ground and marks on the ground.' 159X

Kurma says that a brother and sister, Apé and Sundeu, saw Samboop fighting with the three men and ran away frightened. Kurma told the Mandal but he did nothing about it and made Kurma swear never to talk of the subject. He did not take the case to the Chief Justice. According to Kurma the motive of this crime was the desire to get the property of Chézé of which Kurma's stepfather had been made *ké-tsop*. They thought that since Kurma was living in Lingthem and Samboop was the only member of the holding family they would get it at his death. They were foiled, however, for Kurma claimed all the property; but he was frightened to live there and has since sold the property for Rs. 170 to a *ké-tsop*. Kurma was very repentant at having told the story. Samboop was a big and strong man, taller and broader than Kurma and had always enjoyed good health.

Other versions of same story.

According to Tafoor Samboop died five years ago in the forest in Lik. He was always a hunter and had caught over a dozen wild boars in traps but did not know how to sacrifice properly to Pong rum, *who got angry and killed him. Only his bones were found. All answered Kurma's appeal to search for the corpse.*

According to the Mandal the body was found after some time near a cliff in an advanced state of decomposition; he might have fallen down the cliff or been killed by wild animals. There is no reason to suppose murder.

According to Tempa, Samboop died five years ago across the river; when he was missed the bridge was broken and took two days to repair; and the body was not found till a month later when it was all rotten; the coat and knife were found apart from the body. The reason of death is unknown; Tempa first suggested madness; but then said that Samboop had neither killed himself nor was killed by devils but was murdered; then withdrew his statement and said that as he was no relation he could say nothing about what had happened.

More than a month before he talked about the death of Samboop Kurma had said when discussing hunting and the ritual attached to it

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X159 *that though his deceased younger brother used to hunt he did not know how to sacrifice; Kurma used to do it for him. But on one occasion when he was away his maternal uncle sacrificed and instead of making the offering to Pong* rum *made it to his own god. Whereat his younger brother sickened and died.*

Putting all these versions together, some gathered before and some after Kurma's narrative, it would seem most probable that the man met his death through an accident. Except for Kurma's version all agree that there was a considerable interval before the body was found and the displacement of the knife and clothes which was the chief supposition for murder could easily have been produced by animals. The motive for murder suggested by Kurma seems completely inadequate. The only other person who supported the idea of murder was Tempa, who was himself a notably violent person.

Death of eldest child.

'When my eldest child died I had to make a basket to put the child in and I was so miserable that I decided to throw myself into the river. I said to my mother-in-law "Why should I live any more in this world? I would rather go with my child; I shall jump into the river. I have all these worries and taxes to pay and nothing to live for." My mother-in-law said nothing, but my wife said "What is the meaning of this talk? Do you call yourself a man? Then act like a man. What do you think will happen to us women left all alone by ourselves . . . etc. etc.?"

'This was the only time I wanted to kill myself. Although I was very unhappy as a child I never thought of, or talked about, suicide.'

Death of second wife.

'My second wife was poisoned by being given a *patyoot* of *chi* by Hlatam; she had pains immediately after; her excreta were first pale, then bloody, then black as charcoal; she spat blood and her death occurred; she died within three months. Hlatam had no reason for killing her but the poison she possesses has to be used every so often or it will kill the possessor.'

There was, however, one possible reason for Hlatam killing this girl; her father had died when she was a girl and she accused Hlatam of poisoning him; to prove that this was not true Hlatam then poisoned her accuser.

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Care of youngest child, born 1934.

After the mother's death Kurma's mother-in-law nursed the baby; although the child is in her fourth year she is still giving her a little milk. No medicines are needed to be given; the baby sucks and that produces the milk flow. His mother-in-law is forty-six years old but has not produced a child for several years. Kurma complains that his life is very hard as he has nobody to help him since his mother-in-law is feeble. His nephew is irresponsible and is constantly going away. 159x

Third wife.

Six months after the death of his second wife he met his third wife, who lives at Hi. He slept with her three times and she became pregnant and he did *asék* for her immediately after the memorial service for his second wife. A son was born in September 1936. Kurma says that two other men wanted to marry her but his wife preferred him. He hopes to be able to bring her home in the autumn of 1938.

iv

March 18*th to May* 20*th.*

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March 18*th.*

Recognised Kurma as a personality for the first time. He gave details of several exorcisms.

March 19*th.*

Kurma came to fetch us to conduct us to the *asék* of Chano's eldest son, at his house about a thousand feet down the valley. On the way down he pointed out a tree which was the home of the deut *moong*—fever devil. This devil has been seen and looks like a man covered with long hair. [778]

Kurma also talked about '*ingzong*' and said he had two in the neighbourhood. He said that one reason for establishing '*ingzong*' is because you love one another. Such a relationship is not established after a quarrel; should such an event occur a third party will give a big meal and try to reconcile the two quarrellers. [608]

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X/59 *March 22nd.*

Went to exorcism service of *Go-seum* performed for Datoop's second son, Pichi. Kurma was present assisting in the ceremony. He was more than half drunk and at one moment asked for money to be given to Datoop, which caused very great general embarrassment.

March 24th.

Went down to Pembu's house where the roof was being re-thatched. Kurma arrived rather late in the morning when the work was in full progress, being done fairly haphazardly, and tried to get the work done more efficiently by bossing the other workers, but he was soon forced to give it up.

March 25th.

Kurma came up for a few minutes saying he could not stop and spent a couple of hours discussing marriage regulations.

March 27th.

Kurma and Tinkep, the other *gyapön*, overheard near the monastery saying how indignant they were that at yesterday's Konchen Tyuchen (monastery feast in honour of Kinchenjunga) which was given by Songpo and Katel they were neither of them invited and when they did arrive were not offered anything; they both went away at once.

March 28th.

[439] Two 'Tibetans' arrived from Lachen this morning; they were a man and his wife who came with blankets to sell, or rather exchange against red dye-wood, salt or money. They have eleven *ingzong* in all the valley—three in this village. They will stay a night with each. Last night they stopped with Kurma.

March 29th.

Kurma spent all the morning chiefly talking about Padem and Mun, and talked about his own possession by the Padem.

March 30th.

Visit from the Mandal of Lungdeum; during the day Kurma and Jiroong came up, general talk chiefly about sex. Kurma told an anecdote in pantomime which was one of his favourite stories and often came up. One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a 159x girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted [833] one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived [837 826] husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him after he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the [753] presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on [428] his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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159 *April 7th.*

I felt unwell this day and did not go out but I did not tell other people about it.

April 8th.

Kurma came up in the morning and told me before we had spoken about anything that he had dreamt that I should be ill.[18] He said that he had got rid of his heart ache by making a small offering of butter and rice instead of the proper big offering. Today I asked him to tell me more about his early life, which he had sketched out a couple of days earlier, and he talked practically the whole day without interruption. He went into the most minute details of his [83] sexual activities and physical make-up. He obviously fancies himself very much as a lover.

April 10th.

Kurma talked about a great variety of subjects, chiefly institutionalised customs. He said that according to his standard only two people in the village could be called rich—the Mandal and Takneum *youmi*. He said that he himself was as rich as Jiroong (as a matter of fact this is untrue), but he counts himself a poor man. He also told part of the stories of the first Dorjé Lapoon and Jiroong.[19]

April 16th.

Kurma was occupied from the 16th till the 19th with the business of arranging the repairing of the bamboo bridge which joins Lingthem and Liklyang. He had to get the workers and also the materials and supervise the work which was being performed. He was very busy and officious and seemed to be enjoying himself but complained of the work which prevented him working on his own fields.

April 24th.

Kurma came up again and I chiefly talked to him about the facts which I had learnt since his last visit of general importance, seeking to get confirmation of them. Among the other subjects was the question of the money lenders and indebtedness; Kurma told the history of his own debt (given in Chapter Four). On this subject

[18] Dream given in Chapter Seven, p. 186.
[19] See Chapter Sixteen.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

he said among other things, that it is convenient to have the kanya so near as shops but that they cheat very badly in demanding extortionate interest and also in forcing the debtors to sell their crop early in the season when prices are low instead of letting them wait till prices rise. 159X

He again volunteered several anecdotes about his own sexual experiences. He thinks he has slept with about thirty-eight women in all, of many different races—Nepali, Tibetans etc. He likes Tibetan girls the best; there are a couple down the river who can be had at the price of one rupee. Tibetan girls are 'hot'; they move about so that it is necessary to move very quickly to keep them quiet; Lepcha girls lie like a 'corpse'. He has never had any 'venereal disease'. Some years ago at Lik a girl younger than himself gave him a strap of her own weaving; she also used to bring him food and *chi* in her dress. He slept with Tobgé's sister when she was twelve years old and a virgin; he was the first man to have her. He would have liked to have married her, but his wife was then alive; and when she died the girl had married Nahyeun. He is still very fond of her. He said that he would rather have one wife with many children than many wives with none. He prefers the appearance of a woman to her clothes and jewels. Nahyeun's wife was present during most of the morning and he referred to his relations with her in front of her face and was also very familiar with her; she seemed rather pleased but threw a clod of earth at him. He said that he considered shame a bad thing. 159X 833 159X

April 25th.

Kurma was present at Konchen Tyuchen and got extremely drunk, so drunk that in the morning he did not know what he had done.

April 29th.

Kurma again spent the whole day talking about his past life. In the morning he got a summons from his third wife saying his son was very ill, whereupon he went to try and buy a pig to take with him as a present; he could not find one. He had been given *chi* by one of the people he had called on and was very slightly drunk. For a Lepcha he gets drunk remarkably easily. When I was questioning him about the relative dates of the things he had been talking about he got impatient and asked me why I always asked about himself today instead of asking about the different

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

*159 aspects of the culture as I usually did. He forgot this quickly and soon became voluble again.

I noted on this date ' He is definitely a rather unstable character with a very much stronger ego-feeling than most of the people here. He confessed today that he had exaggerated his wealth; he had said untruly that he was richer than Jiroong whereas in fact he has very little land. I think he is chiefly truthful but wants to be in the foreground of the picture and will exaggerate in both directions (i.e. at one moment claiming to be very poor at another very rich) to preserve a dramatic position. He is subject to changing moods. He definitely enjoys the power which being *gyapön* gives and is inclined to take up a position of authority in situations not called for by the culture. His relish of scenes of cruelty and his persecution mania about poison are remarkable here. In a less easy-going society he might be either a vagabond, a lunatic or a chief.'

May 5th.

Datoop was up talking about a variety of subjects and in his conversation passed some judgements on his fellow villagers, including Kurma. Of Kurma he said ' He gets easily drunk. He is proud and boastful, claiming to have possessions and capabilities which he has not got. I consider that he enjoys his authority as *gyapön* more than is fitting.'

May 10th.

Today Kurma returned from his parents-in-law after being with them nine days; his infant son has recovered. Saw very little of him as he was drinking at Chano's house where the exorcism was taking place until late at night. He sometimes used to go into Mangan to fetch the mail, but according to the servant, if he has any money he stays and gets drunk there.

May 12th.

Kurma came up today when Chudo and Chala Mandal were already present. I sent him away with a flea in his ear because he had promised to come up on the 10th and had disappointed us.

May 13th.

Kurma came up this morning after I had been very nasty with him yesterday for having disappointed us three days ago. I had not believed he was ill as he looked all right; but this morning about

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eleven o'clock he had a bad fit of shivering as from fever, though his pulse was low. He spent the earlier part of the morning talking about his past life and especially about religious ceremonials and his own experiences as Padem. He has three rosaries and can make diagnosis. He never had a teacher to learn how to do this but learnt it through the inspiration of Padem *rum* and also from observing his mother and other Mun. He gave an illustration of the way in which he would consult his rosary in the event of another person being ill. Whether consultation shall be made or not depends partly on personal inclination and partly on wealth. Kurma said he had not consulted for his sick son or for himself because of the expense. About midday he almost collapsed and I had to give him medicine. He says he has been this way for seven days and cannot sleep inside but only out of doors. He has completely lost appetite and when he shivers suffers from optical disturbances; grown-ups look no bigger than children and he sees red and white spots moving about over the ground and has a pain under his heart; a couple of days ago he was really bad and thought he was going to die. No Mun or lama has been called in; who is going to do it? His mother-in-law and nephew are 'strangers' and do not care about him.

He has recently spent seven days with his parents-in-law working for them; it was his first visit for three months. His small son was ill with a discharge of blood from his ears and sores all down one side. At present he is slightly recovered. No professional advice was called in. Kurma says one woman said of the child: 'His father is a foreigner from Lingthem, why bother about it?'

May 19th.

Kurma came up to-day for the first time since the 13th; he walked with a stick and still looked very seedy, sweating profusely. He said, however, he was better and brought a present of eggs and tomatoes for the medicine I had given him; I gave him a lot of quinine and a little aspirin; he took all the latter but only three tablets of the quinine because it was so bitter. He was in a highly nervous state and when there was a sharp noise (either a gun[20] or a bamboo snapping) he jumped several inches and exclaimed in a frightened voice: '*athu lukni lu-li-ko*'—words which I cannot translate and which Kurma said were meaningless; to turn the

[20] There are a couple of very old match-locks in the village which are occasionally used.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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question aside he said he often jumped if there were loud noises in the forest and went on to tell a long anecdote about a time when he had met a bear.

His father-in-law had sent a message to summon him, a rather shaming request, saying: 'You have not been here for three months and now your baby is ill; what do you intend to do about it?' He, of course, had to go at once and took as a present a shoulder of pig which he bought at Lungdeung. His wife was very angry and refused to sleep with him for three days. At the end of three days he asked permission to return because he said he had to look after us, but his father-in-law refused him permission and he had to wait seven days helping to cut down trees and clear land. At his father-in-law's house he cannot copulate with his wife until he hears everybody snoring and he stays awake thinking why don't these people go to sleep? He takes his duties to his parents-in-law seriously; if he was summoned he would go at once and find some substitute to carry on the work he was engaged on when the summons came. As a man *asék* but not yet married he is treated like a servant.

He says he has got two bastards both by married women living with their husbands, so he has not performed *thip-song*. One was born ten years ago when he was married to his first wife; the mother was Samblyou (the elder sister of Gongyop's wife), whose husband was then living. He thinks it was his child because (*a*) it resembled him strongly, and (*b*) it was born just ten months after a particularly emphatic copulation. The child died of dysentery when it was three. The second bastard was by a woman of Rongyel; it is a boy and is now twelve years old. Kurma says he knows he is his son because the woman said so; she does not get on with her husband. Now Kurma is ashamed to see her and will go away if he knows she is in the neighbourhood. The child is considered and treated as legitimate.

Although he is Padem Kurma cannot sacrifice to Mayel[21] as he has not got *loong*; he could learn to do so after watching carefully three times. He also cannot *sakyou faat* (perform the ceremony with the buttered cup of *chi*) but he can do all the ceremony for *thyak-dum*.

He said today that instead of collecting the two annas from each household for oil for the monastery *chimi* he would buy it himself out of the money we had given him.

[21] See Chapter Nine.

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Kurma went to Talung with Datoop to put a tin roof on the monastery; he there made '*ingzong*' with the lama, who entertained him very well. He saw there some strangely elastic thread and also all the clothes of the hero Lapchen Chumbu from the age of three weeks onwards and the *choten* containing his head. 159X

May 20th.

A number of people were up here this morning including most of Datoop's family and Kurma. During the morning Mrs. Datoop and Kurma drew aside to consult about the situation arising from the fact that Dadool had not returned home and that Mrs. Dadool had gone away.[22] They both seemed genuinely concerned. Later Kurma talked about Aga and said vehemently that he was an evil-minded man. He also said when talking about Aga and the disturbance caused by his taking a second wife, that he had been so disgusted by the immorality of Samblyou, by whom he earlier said that he had a bastard, that he had abandoned her many years ago. What chiefly disgusted him was that she slept with Satéo and also his father, which is *nam-toak* a year of disaster. He said that Samblyou was, together with her eldest sister the second wife of Takal, the most notoriously promiscuous woman in the village and that the second wife of Takal spent her time seducing young boys. He does not like her and speaks of her with obvious distaste.

May 25th.

Kurma accompanied me to Mangan and seemed very sorry to see me go.

[22] See Chapter Five, pp. 141–142

[p. 414 is blank]

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE FIRST DORJÉ LAPOON, HIS FAMILY, AND JIROONG

i

124 It is not enough to wish to collect life-histories; it is also necessary to get people who are willing to tell them. I very much regret that I was not able to obtain in any comparable detail the story of a well-adjusted Lepcha, to contrast with that of Kurma with his obvious maladjustments. But I think it was just his maladjustments which made him so remarkably communicative; his feeling of inferiority and ill-treatment, his consciousness of being somewhat different to the rest of the community led him to place more confidence and spend more time with strangers than a well-integrated person would be likely to do.

I have already said that I consider Chala Mandal and Tafoor to be the best-integrated Lepchas in Lingthem; I saw a great deal of both of them—Tafoor was almost my most constant and altogether my most reliable informant—but my attempts to get them to tell their own stories were almost completely unsuccessful. They both had very little self-feeling; they envisaged their relationships with others entirely practically and objectively, apparently untinged by emotion. Their feelings towards others were always rational, and their accounts of their dealings with them consisted of long lists of mutual help and benefits, with very great emphasis on the food given and received.

I did get short accounts of their past lives from a number of people; some of them have already been given (e.g. Gongyop's story in Chapter Eight, Rigya's in Chapter Fourteen, and so on) in full, and small excerpts have been made from others which are not full enough to be informative. Since, however, I feel that Kurma's story by itself would give an over-biased picture, I propose to give as a counterbalance the interrelated stories of the first Dorjé Lapoon, of his son Datoop and of his wife and family, and of Jiroong, whose first wife the first Dorjé Lapoon stole.

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124 The first Dorjé Lapoon I saw very little of, and his history was told to me, partly by Kurma, and partly by his son Datoop. He was a very old man and spent most of his time alone in the field-house where he lived looked after by his younger son. I also learned from Kurma that portion of Jiroong's life which was involved in the scandal of his first wife and the Dorjé Lapoon, and also the story of Jiroong's sister. The greater part of Jiroong's life and all the rest of the stories were got from the people themselves. It is worth remarking that, although these people are all less obviously maladjusted than Kurma, they had all except Jiroong had the unusual experience of living some years outside Zongu.

The first Dorjé Lapoon, Datoop and Jiroong were all lamas; Datoop was by far the most pious. Jiroong was a lama through his horoscope and not through birth, and appeared to attach rather more importance to the Mun ritual; in his house his sister always officiated. Mrs. Datoop was a very strong character, and overbore both her husband and her son Pembu. Jiroong was also dominated by his wife.

The accompanying genealogies should make the rather involved relationships clearer. (See page 417).

ii

The first Dorjé Lapoon.

x 159 588 The first Dorjé Lapoon, now aged eighty-two, has been his whole life long poor, lustful and shameless. As a young man he was married to his first wife, but after three years he left her because he wished to marry another woman, one Lungdeumu, his classificatory aunt.[1] He was told that he and she were too closely related for them to marry; but he was shameless and persisted in the marriage. Since the consanguinity was all through the female line no social action other than expressed disapproval was taken against this incestuous match.

x 159 Lungdeumu was the mother of his son Datoop, who was born in 1881. As soon as the child was born the Dorjé Lapoon took a dislike to his wife and went away to Darjeeling for a year to work there. On his return Lungdeumu's brother tried to induce him to return to his wife but he refused. Thereupon Lungdeumu's brother said 'You are no longer responsible for my sister; I shall give her in marriage again, and you will have no claim on the bride-price.'

[1] Her mother and his maternal grandmother were biological sisters.

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PLATE 28

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MRS. DATOOP

PICHI

[Facing p. 416]

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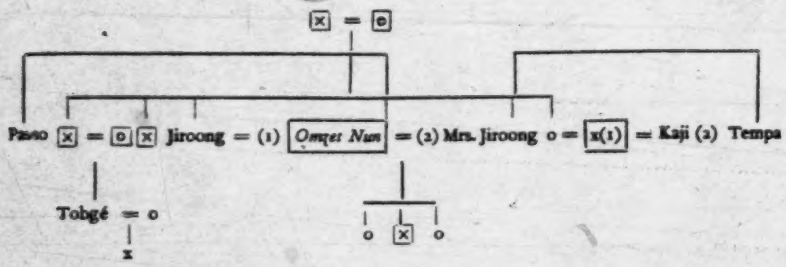
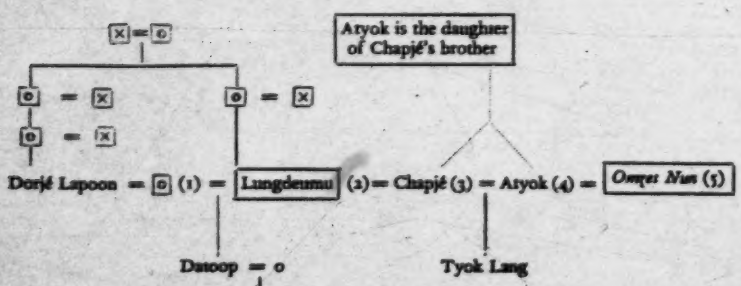
Genealogy of JIROONG
(Takpo Ptso)



x means man
o means woman
= means marries
☒ ⊙ means dead

Genealogy of FIRST DORJÉ LAPOON
(Sakmi Ptso)



2 D

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X 159

She subsequently married Kazoo Mandal as his second wife, the first wife being an 'aunt' of hers; she had no further children.

After this divorce the Dorjé Lapoon spent several years unmarried wandering round the country. Eventually he settled in the village of Lungdeum and there took a fancy to a girl called Chapjé; he lived in her parents' house and slept with her until finally her parents insisted on his marrying her. Since he was a poor man they accepted the symbolical *asék* present of *akut* (a piece of roast meat); since he was living as *komok myok* the expenses of the marriage feast were borne by Chapjé's parents. Chapjé's elder brother had a daughter called Atyok, and some years after his marriage with the aunt the Dorjé Lapoon on a visit to her brother's family (for they lived in a distant village) slept with and impregnated the niece. Atyok's parents insisted on his performing the *thip-song* ceremony (to acknowledge his paternity of the bastard) and on his marrying the mother. Atyok's son, Tyok Lang, was born in 1912. The Dorjé Lapoon, his two wives and his son all lived together in the house of Chapjé's parents.

Meanwhile the Dorjé Lapoon's elder son, Datoop, had returned home to Lingthem after his period of work as State carpenter, and through the industry of himself and his wife was starting to become very prosperous. Since there was more comfort to be had at his son's house than at his father-in-law's the Dorjé Lapoon some years after the birth of his younger son left his wives and went to live with his married son.

At this period the monastery at Lingthem had not yet been rebuilt. The main door faced east, and the *lha-gong*—the room which contains the prayer-wheels—was a separate small building which contained only one prayer-wheel. It was the duty of the nuns to look after this room, turn the prayer-wheel, and recite the special prayers; and the nun chiefly responsible for this work was the Omzet nun, who was Jiroong's first wife.[2]

It has always been part of the duties of the superior lamas to visit the monastery from time to time for private prayer and devotions. During these visits the Dorjé Lapoon made the acquaintance of the Omzet nun; at first they prayed and fasted together, and subsequently used the monastery in a manner which was far from devotional. After this liaison had started the Dorjé Lapoon completely abandoned his two living wives, and spent his time between the monastery, his son's house, and Jiroong's. Jiroong was unable

[2] See under, p. 428.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to make a complaint since the Dorjé Lapoon was his religious superior. 159X

After they had been left completely alone for three years Chapjé and Atyok came to Lingthem on a formal visit of protest; they were accompanied by the Mandal of Lungdeum, an 'elder brother' of Chapjé, and an experienced old man from Lungdeum; and a big meeting was called at which all the lamas were present, and also the Mandal and the *youmi*. This took place in 1922. The assembled people ordered the Dorjé Lapoon to return to his legitimate wives; but he refused absolutely, saying that he would rather be killed than return to Lungdeum. He was then given the alternative of bringing Chapjé and Atyok to live with him in Lingthem; he consented to this and they all went to live at Datoop's house. He and the Omzet nun were also made to swear that they would have nothing more to do with one another. They took this oath publicly, but previously they had privately sworn that they would continue to live together. The Dorjé Lapoon therefore did not resume marital relations with his legitimate wives; instead he used to creep out by night to meet Mrs. Jiroong.

Chapjé and Atyok stood this for three months, and then they returned to Lungdeum with Atyok's son. Shortly after their return the deputation of three who had accompanied them on their first visit returned to Lingthem to claim the divorce money *gé-thop* from the Dorjé Lapoon. He paid one pig, one ox, a big copper pot, a brass jug and plate and Rs. 20; he should really have given Rs. 88, but the people of Lungdeum agreed to accept less owing to the Dorjé Lapoon's poverty. Even the Rs. 20 he had to borrow from the monastery funds. This divorce renewed the public scandal; to quieten it the first Dorjé Lapoon announced his intention of taking the vows of a celibate monk[3] and of giving up all contact with the Omzet nun. At this period the Mandal also fined Jiroong Rs. 15 for failing to keep his wife in order.

Two months after the Dorjé Lapoon had proclaimed his intention of taking the vows of celibacy Jiroong reported to the Mandal that the lovers were still meeting. Another meeting of the lamas, Mandal and *youmi* was then called and they instructed Datoop to prevent his father from going to the monastery except at public ceremonies; and even at those he was not to go near the *lha-gong*.

[3] It is permissible for any lama, even one with a family, to renounce the world and become a *gé-long*, a celibate monk. Such celibates live under a very stringent discipline.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated; Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *ptso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE DATOOP FAMILY IN THE DOORWAY OF THE LHA-GONG

Standing: Mrs. Pembu, Pembu, Kondé (a "niece"; I have just bandaged her).

Seated: The younger married daughter, Kolok Tyong, the youngest son, Mrs. Datoop with Pembu's son Dugoo, and Datoop.

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[facing p. 420]

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X/159

father left home the household consisted of his mother, his grandmother and two aunts. At about the age of fifteen he was sent to the State school at Gangtok to be trained as a carpenter; for many years he made his headquarters there, travelling round the country wherever he was wanted.

He was married about the age of fifteen, but the marriage was not consummated until about five years later. He thinks he finally settled in Lingthem about 1910.

Shortly after he had settled down his father married his third and fourth wives. Datoop said that he loved both mothers equally, but the marriages entailed considerable expense. He speaks quite openly about his father's misdemeanours; he was, he said, not surprised at his connection with the first Mrs. Jiroong but he was very angry; he tried to restrain him but failed.

All his life he has had to travel about as a State carpenter, going wherever fine work was required. He helped to build the King Edward VII memorial at Gangtok. On May 10th, 1937, he had to leave for Gyatong, to work at the new monastery under construction there.[4] Before setting out he came to say goodbye to us, bringing us a present of eggs, milk and vegetables; he insisted that these goods should be an absolute present and would accept nothing in return.

Datoop has no fixed ideas about the desirability of the different stages of life; he is inclined to apply the maxim 'Call no man happy till he dies.' He thinks it is good to die old—about the age of eighty—provided you retain your strength, that your sons are alive, and that you leave enough property for a good *sanglion*. Consequently he will only allow dead people to be considered happy—such people as the Muktair and the Mandal's father. To try to elucidate his views further I suggested that a god would appear and offer him to go to which year he liked; he said to this that he would choose to become a child again, so as to have his whole life to live over. He was very fond of telling stories, particularly animal fables; as a fairly pious lama he turned the supernaturals in even obviously Mun stories into lamaist deities. His rank as lama is *chichembu*; he has given up the office of *chithembu* and cannot yet make the validating feast to be *omzet* as sufficient time has not yet elapsed.

[4] See Chapter Two, p. 58.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X159 *Mrs. Datoop.*

Mrs. Datoop was born at Rangen outside Zongu in 1888. She was married when she was eight to her husband who was then fifteen, but did not sleep with him till five years later. During the intervening period she used to pay him short visits and he paid her longer ones. Her eldest son Pembu was born when she was twenty. She has had in all three sons and two daughters. She considers that having or not having children is entirely a matter of luck and thinks it best that the first child should be a boy.

She occasionally returns to re-visit her brothers; her parents are now dead. According to Kurma, who is distantly related to her, and other people who remember her as a girl, she was the most outstandingly beautiful Lepcha girl they had known. She is distantly connected with the Mandal and Takneum *youmi.*

At the monastery feast which took place on April 20th she was not present; I heard from Pichi that she was unwell and sent her some aspirin; on April 25th she brought me a present of eggs to thank me. She is a very capable, self-assured woman; she makes little pretence at modesty but answers straightforwardly without flirting, as women much older and uglier than her will do. She said for her illness she had called in a Mun, and a pig was sacrificed; also mixed crops and jewels. Jewels can be re-offered as often as necessary; the supernatural does not take anything from them, metaphysically or physically; it is merely gratified at the sight and intention of the offering.

Mrs. Datoop considers that when girls are married away from home young they are unhappy and cry at leaving their parents, but older girls are glad to go to their husbands. Women, she said, have no private cult apart from the ancestral gods to correspond with Pong *rum*; nor is there any part of their lives from which men can be excluded.

[178] Mrs. Datoop weaves very well. She buys the coloured thread and will take about a week to make a full-sized piece. She says she does not weave much now because there is no market for the Lepcha cloth and people won't wear it. She, together with Mrs. Jiroong, who has almost always a spindle in her hand carding wool wherever she goes, are the only two women nowadays who spin at all consistently.

Mrs. Datoop is a woman of very considerable private property—she and her daughters and daughter-in-law have by far the finest

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

jewels of any women in Lingthem—and also very considerable generosity. She practically supports the children of Pargeut, who is distantly related to her husband (they share a common grandmother) and acts more like their mother than their own mother does. The consequence was that she was the only person who had the confidence of Kondé.[5] When Kondé was having her very painful sores dressed Mrs. Datoop would hold and soothe her with an altogether surprising physical gentleness and tact which was unparalleled among other Lepcha women. 159x

No scandal had ever been attached to Mrs. Datoop's name but she had the reputation of being highly sexed and all her potential *oong-op* have taken full advantage of the relationship.

For four generations Mrs. Datoop's family had the peculiarity of rearing their children in cradles. She was so reared and so were all her children, but Pembu her eldest son has not used one for his own child. [184 854]

Pembu.

Pembu was born in 1908 and was weaned at the age of two. As a child he was exceptionally frightened and nervous of strangers: indeed he is to this day. As a young child he was very frequently and seriously ill. When he was older up to the age of ten he used to sulk if reprimanded or punished and threaten to kill himself by jumping into the fire or from a high place. The parents would not try to restrain him; they would say 'If such a child wants to kill himself he can.' Sometimes he would run away for the day to an 'uncle's' but he always came back of his own accord of an evening.

At the age of five[6] he was sent to Gangtok as a servant for the Maharajah; the community has to furnish perpetually two boys for this work. In Gangtok he lived with an 'aunt' Kafermu, a woman who had at that time no children. He used to come home yearly for a holiday. The first year he was there he was very miserable but the second time he returned happily enough. Mrs. Datoop said that all the time he was away or when he was ill she was always very anxious and unhappy. When Pembu was about fifteen he quarrelled with his 'uncle' who complained to the Maharajah and Pembu came home for good. Datoop and his wife were glad to have their son back but regretted the cause of his return. On his

[5] See Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

[6] So he says: but as has been pointed out, Lepchas have no number sense, and I think he was probably older.

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*159 return he started to learn lama's work (he is now *kané*); his teacher was his 'uncle' the second Dorjé Lapoon. At sixteen he was married to a girl from Hi; she was twelve at the time and had no relations here. Her first child miscarried (this is said to be an inherited disability in her family) but a boy, Doogu, was born in 1934. His wife was pregnant again in April 1937.

On April 28th he came up to have a sore on his foot dressed; owing to having worn boots at Gangtok and sometimes since, the skin on his feet and legs is much more tender than that of the other Lepchas. While his foot was soaking I dressed Kondé's face and when the blood flowed he winced obviously and audibly. He said that if he saw people bleed or animals killed or a human corpse he felt the pain as if it was his own. He said he had never fainted but he frequently has nightmares so terrifying that he wakes up screaming. The most frequent subjects of such dreams are falling off rocks or being chased by bulls.

I never once heard Pembu make a joke, though he laughed freely enough at the jokes of others. He is very subdued and quiet.

Both he and his wife obviously dote on their child, Dugoo, and spoil him outrageously. The baby is very precocious and independent. On one occasion he got angry with another child his own age and hit him once with his closed fist. The child hit burst into laughter and so did Dugoo's parents but the bystanders were rather shocked. Although he is not yet four he has already thrown away his shell necklace. At another date I gave him a packet of water flowers as a present to take home; he grizzled when other people wanted to hold it to look at; when he got it he put it very carefully away inside his coat. Mrs. Datoop made him pick a red cactus to give to me; the first he threw at me, the second he handed nicely and then picked up the first and scolded me for taking it with only one hand. After three or four weeks he became really attached to me and called me 'uncle' and used to climb over me or tug at me to attract my attention—a thing no other child dared to do.

After Pembu, was born a daughter in 1910, then Pichi in 1914 and a second daughter about 1918 and the youngest son, Kolok Tyong in 1922. Both daughters have married into their mother's village, the younger one going as second wife to the husband of a sterile aunt. Both have borne children which they are rearing in cradles.

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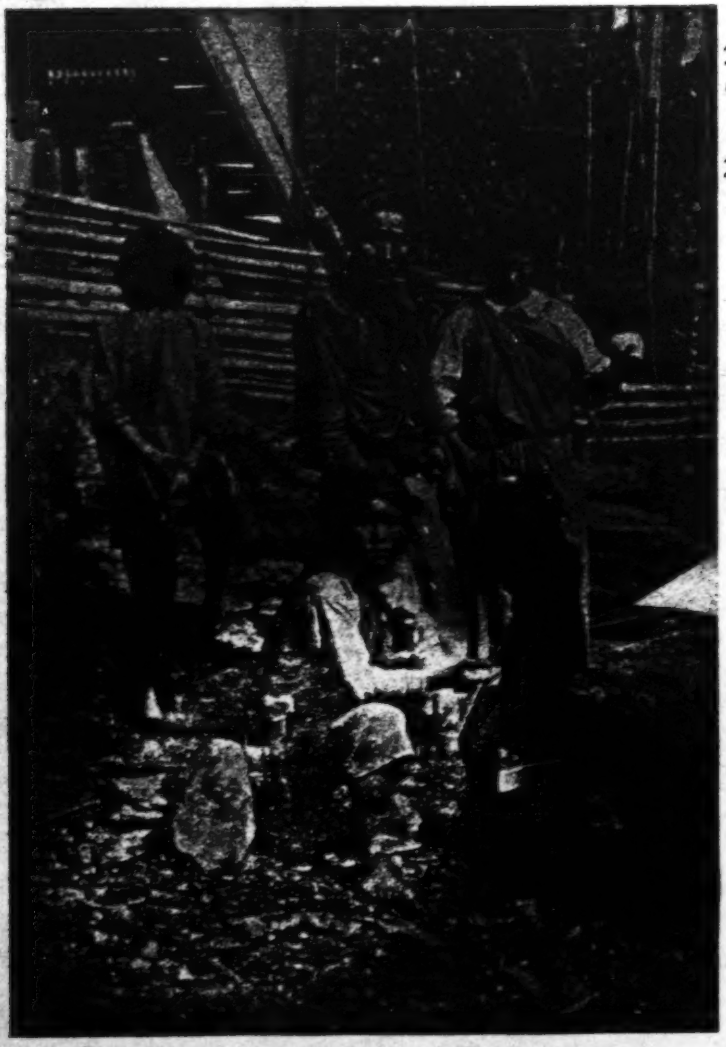

MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

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Pichi.

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Pichi has spent the great part of his life at Gangtok, from about the age of six until the last three months. First of all he went to school, during which period he lived with his 'aunt', and subsequently to the carpentry school, when he lived with the superintendent. He enjoyed it there and was never at all home-sick. He learnt to speak Nepali and Sikkimese there.

As a child he slept beside his mother's elder sister when the youngest sister was born; subsequently when Kolok Tyong was born the two sisters slept together and now Pichi is sleeping beside his younger brother.

Pichi has quite a lot of private property which was given to him by his father before he went to Gangtok. During his absence his parents looked after it for him. He has four or five cattle, about ten goats, cardamum producing six or seven maunds and rice terraces producing three or four maunds. His private rice is eaten by the family household without consulting him, but the money from the cardamum is entirely his own to do what he likes with.

In 1936 an old childless couple died and although he was absent the Mandal appointed Pichi *ké-tsop*; this means in fact that he is the owner of the land and house of this couple (all the animals and movable property had to be given to the two married daughters of the dead man) and the land is registered in his name, though his father works it and pays the taxes. When this property was acquired the old house and land were given to Pembu and his wife.

A marriage was arranged for Pichi with a girl in Hi while he was at Gangtok; he was informed about it but said he was too busy to come so his younger brother Kolok Tyong acted as his representative for the *aték*. He knew the girl before the marriage was arranged. Tafoor acted as 'uncle' in his marriage and the Mandal as *bek-bu*. However, when Pichi finally came home he resolutely refused the arranged marriage, saying that he would prefer to choose his own wife. For a time there was much ambiguity about the situation; Datoop hoped that Pichi would accept the girl finally, merely refusing on account of shyness; and for a long time Pichi himself was not sufficiently emphatic to his parents for them to be able to be quite certain what was to be done. The Mandal said that the girl is affianced to either Pichi or Kolok Tyong according to

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which she may choose. Both horoscopes are suitable; and he has advised her to marry both brothers.[7]

The situation seems to have been that Kolok Tyong performed the *asék* but that if Pichi could be persuaded to take the girl Datoop would prefer it. By May 9th it was finally decided that Kolok Tyong should marry the girl at the coming harvest; Kolok Tyong is a very plump and self-satisfied boy and extremely independent, but he says very little. Pichi gave as one of his reasons for refusing the marriage the fact that he would be away so much and did not like the idea of leaving a wife alone for months at a time.

Shortly after his return home Pichi was taken ill with pains in his stomach and back and head and in his 'heart'; and for this illness his parents had very elaborate ceremonies performed by lamas and Mun. When the ceremony was performed Pichi looked very ill and rather like a sleep-walker, glassy eyed and with a waxy complexion and very slow movements. Three days after the exorcism I saw him and he confessed that he had felt nothing during the exorcism and was sceptical about its efficacy. He considered that it would only be shown to be valuable if he got better. Subsequently he was quite cured but he still said he did not believe in the general validity of these exorcism ceremonies.

iii

Jiroong.

Jiroong is forty-one. He was the third son of his parents; his sister is three years younger than he is. He became a lama from his own choice and because the sign was found on him; no relations of his were lamas before him. His family was very poor, indeed necessitous.[8] His teacher was the first Dorjé Lapoon who later seduced his first wife.

His memories of early childhood from the age of two are very precise. He has clear memories of sitting in his mother's lap and drinking her milk while older people sitting around him pulled his ears and scolded him because he cried for no reason. He remembers running to his mother because bigger boys teased him.

[7] I think more or less as a joke. It is quite permissible for two brothers to share a wife, especially if the elder brother has to travel about a great deal as Pichi, being a state carpenter, will have to do. But the arrangement is not very popular. See Chapter Six, p. 171.

[8] It will be remembered that they are descendants of slaves.

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His sister was born when he was three. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth. He was very frightened at the birth, which he witnessed. He was told the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*, a devil the size of a small child who is especially used as a bogey to frighten children. He was weaned in two ways; first of all his mother's breasts were smeared with the new baby's excrement and secondly an aunt took him home, telling him that he must not cry because Sang-rong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him. For a week—he remembers clearly—he cried every night for his mother's breast and then resigned himself to do without. The aunt looked after him, sometimes taking him to her house, sometimes going to his and sleeping with him. She was his father's sister. 159x

As a child he was, he considers, exceptionally timid. Most of his memories are to do with being bullied by older children; a cousin of his beating him for being disobedient when he was six or seven; two older boys ducking him and other small children in the stream, whereat they cried and the parents of the small boys came and beat the bullies. He also remembers sitting beside another small child and they threw mud and cinders at one another. He was carried by his mother or grandmother till he was five years old and remembers that vividly. He also remembers playing with other children at building bridges and making a house out of twigs and of once playing tug-of-war. His father gave him a little knife when he was quite young, he thinks before he was weaned. At the same time his mother gave him a haversack. Before he got the little knife he used to try to use grown-ups' knives. When his father gave him the knife he told him to be very careful—not to cut his friends or to use the knife on stones and so on. [857]

He apparently cried easily and ran to his mother; he remembers crying and sucking at the same time whereat bystanders slapped him. Although he connects the birth of the younger sister with weaning he has always been very fond of her. His mother died when he was fifteen.

He knew about sexual intercourse when he was nine or ten but he was too timid to do anything when he played with girls and other boys. His first sexual experience was when he was fifteen with his elder brother's wife. His elder brother was away for the night and the wife called Jiroong to come and sleep with her. He took the invitation literally and went to sleep; but she forcibly seduced him. In this way she educated him and after that

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159 he was no longer so timid. As a child he had been particularly frightened of strangers.

The house which he lives in now was formerly inhabited by an unrelated man who was married to the Omzet nun; she was the sister of Passo, Kurma's adopting father. All the family of this woman's husband died relatively suddenly and she was left alone with the property. Passo tried to get his sister to return to him, whereupon the Mandal said that it would be better to find a *ké-tsop*. Jiroong was decided upon and given to the Omzet nun as husband. But she never liked him; he was very many years younger than she was; and soon the scandal with the first Dorjé Lapoon started.

After he had been forced to give his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around a lot looking for girls; eventually he linked up with Tempa's sister, who was then visiting her brother. She was unmarried and Jiroong slept with her and subsequently *asék*'d her properly, except that he only gave one pig. After *asék* she came to live with him and also with the first Dorjé Lapoon and his wife; they worked together for one year and then she returned home for a single night for the marriage ceremony. This was performed quite properly, except that she did not return home again afterwards. They have had three children, two girls and a boy, but the boy died.

Jiroong's sister, who is a Mun, married the eldest of three brothers in Liklyang; she could not stand her husband and loved his youngest brother. This turning away from her husband created a public scandal; and Tafoor's father the Muktair decided that she was to be tied up to the monastery wall and beaten. She tried to commit suicide by running down to throw herself into the river but she was followed and stopped. She was then tied up and beaten but she claimed that even if they killed her they could not make her like her present husband; so after the beating she was allowed to marry whom she liked, and she chose her husband's youngest brother who was a *kané*.

This second marriage was not smooth, however; she once tried to run away from her husband and quarrelled so much with her neighbours in the four houses by her house down in the valley that the pair were asked to leave. The *kané* was pleased as the daily walk to and from the monastery was very tiring and they asked Jiroong for a plot of ground above his house. The *kané* died after they had lived there a year. She refused to take the *oong-op*, her husband's 'younger brother' and instead married Kaji, an old man in the

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habit of seeing devils, whose wife, like her husband, had died of dysentery. 159X

About twelve years ago Jiroong set up '*ingrong*' with Balyoop, a lama living at Panung. His chief reason was so as to have a substitute for his dead brothers to help him and his children. (Balyoop himself is childless.) Also they were fond of one another. Balyoop is considerably older than he is; Mrs. Jiroong calls him 'father' out of respect.

Jiroong considers that the happiest time of life is an easy old age if you have your health and children or others to help you. He said that he considered Pong-ring lucky because all the villagers feed him. (This old widowed man is covered with sores and full of disease and most people consider he would be happier dead.) He considers, however, that Serving and Kahlyeu are unlucky because they are more or less alone. He says that the best thing in life is to do good to others.

He first said he would like to be the richest man in the village and then withdrew his statement saying that all he wanted was enough to eat and wear for him and his. He is worried and anxious and timid. He has been unfortunate in both his marriages.[9] He has no desire to re-live any early part of his life again.

He has three small rice terraces; he cannot have more as he has nobody to help make them; the only men in the household are himself and his nephew Tobgé, and they are busy getting the crops without attending to building terraces. Neither he nor any of his brothers have ever contemplated or threatened suicide. Jiroong can swim in the river in winter; he learnt from watching others and trying. The only other person who is known to be able to swim is old Songpo. [481]

Jiroong is a particularly industrious person and is slowly becoming one of the wealthier figures in the village.

[9] It will be remembered that it was his wife who was the cause of all the major quarrels in the village in the last three years. See Chapter Five, pp. 140–142.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SOCIAL EVOLUTION AND AGGRESSION: SOME SUGGESTIONS

i

Many and various have been the uses to which anthropology[1]—the observation and study of strange and usually materially primitive and analphabetic societies—has been put. The aim of the earliest ethnologists, Herodotus and the Chinese travellers, seems to have been primarily diversion, though the constant favourable contrast between civilisation and various forms of barbarism was always an underlying motif. To a great extent the same is true of the European travellers and missionaries of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though on the whole with these writers the stress was more on the benefits of Christianity than on those of civilisation. In the eighteenth century for the first time the accounts of primitive peoples were turned to a political and philosophical use; great play was made of the contrast between the sexual freedom and other desirable qualities of certain primitive (chiefly Pacific) people and the restraint and undesirable social arrangements imposed on Europeans. This argument was most fully developed by the French, notably Diderot with his *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* and J.-J. Rousseau, with his 'noble savage'. De Sade employed the accounts of primitive peoples a great deal to illustrate the local and historical variations of various moral and political ideas. Rousseau also used the accounts of primitive peoples for the first evolutionary theory of human society—the theory of the Social Contract.

The same themes—the contrast between European civilisation and savagery, and the evolution of society—were dominant during

[1] Since writing this chapter I have seen Professor Robert H. Lowie's *The History of Ethnological Theory* (London: Harrap: 1937), which treats in great detail the subjects which I have touched on in these first two sections. For a full treatment of the progress of ethnology in the last century this book can hardly be bettered.

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the nineteenth century also; but at this period, and especially during the second half of the century, the emphases were reversed; the very obvious material progress of Europe gave a great feeling of security to the vast majority of the writers of that period and the contrasts between the European and the savage were entirely in favour of the European; at this epoch it was the horrible, and very frequently the 'unmentionable', habits of primitives which were stressed: the type primitive was a cannibal indulging in nameless orgies. The over-simplified popular views of Darwin's theory of evolution were responsible for the 'step-ladder' view of social evolution, with the Fuzzy-Wuzzies on the bottom rung and the nation to which the writer belonged on the top, with all other societies neatly graded in between. Up till 1914 and even later the 'step-ladder' theory held the principal place in the theories of anthropology put out by various, usually arm-chair, ethnologists; but social evolution was studied less than the evolution of certain ideas—magic and religion, monogamic marriage, monotheism and so on; the moral of all these anthologies, some of them of great charm and literary merit, was that primitive humanity started from something quite different and by gradual stages reached the apex of the viewpoint held by the writer.

The imperialist development of the end of the nineteenth century produced two results: it developed a social theory, diffusionism, which was parallel to and a justification of imperialism, and it also led to a more careful and accurate study of primitive races, so that the imperialists, who at that epoch discovered that colonial labour was of value, could govern the subject races without having to massacre them. The theory of diffusionism, that all social improvements derived from a single source (usually Egypt), was a great justification for the repetition of this process by a single conquering power (usually England or Germany).

I do not wish to suggest that all the anthropological work done before 1914 was useless; on the contrary a great deal was and remains of first-class importance and value; but the currently held version of evolution and the belief in progress almost inevitably resulted in all the emphasis and attention of the ethnologists being directed to those aspects of primitive societies which were in obvious contrast to European society, and a practically complete neglect of those unformalised aspects of human life which were more or less similar in all human societies. In particular very great attention was laid on those details which the evolutionary theories of society

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claimed to be typical of societies at a certain stage of development, such as totemism, exogamy, ritual king-killing, initiation rites and the like; the unhappy ethnographer who was studying a society in which one or more of these phenomena were lacking had to use all his ingenuity to explain such peculiar absences.

Among the evolutionary theories of the nineteenth century only one still obtains much support to-day, and that, in Western Europe and America, chiefly from people who are not primarily anthropologists; that is the materialist conception of social evolution described by Lewis H. Morgan in his *Ancient Society* and elaborated and given wide publicity by Frederick Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* Among Soviet Russian ethnologists this little book is given almost scriptural value; outside the U.S.S.R. its acceptance or rejection appears to depend on private political attitudes rather than on ascertainable fact. In a very great number of details Morgan and Engels are now patently incorrect, either through ignorance, through an insufficiency of facts, or through misinterpretation or arbitrary selection of the facts at their disposal. Their evolutionary views were as over-simple as those of their contemporaries, another 'step-ladder' neatly divided into three sections with three divisions in each; and into one of these nine subdivisions all societies that had been, or could be, had to be placed; the subdivisions depended primarily on property relations, but each type of society was meant to be exactly correlated with certain phases of technical development, familial and religious institutions and social organisation. Like all the other evolutionary theories this was an obvious over-simplification, and further knowledge disclosed societies with features of two or more of the Morgan-Engels subdivisions; this fact, together with the abhorrence of most anthropologists for the political doctrines of Marx and Engels, became a sufficient excuse for the ignoring or dismissal of the extremely valuable general theory Morgan had advanced; academic anthropology either ignored it completely or claimed to disprove it by the fact that no society has been reported in which some sort of private property did not exist. In so far as this is not simply dishonest, it is a piece of verbal sophistry; communism does not mean 'common possession'; and the existence of private property no more disproves or disqualifies the classification of 'primitive communism' than the existence of common pasturage in most of Western Europe up to the end of the eighteenth century indicates that the boroughs or

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communes to which these common pasture lands were attached were communist. Primitive communism, as I understand the term, depends on certain property and social relationships, notably that no portion of the (at any rate adult male) population is debarred from property-owning, and, as a corollary, that no one man or one section of the population can exploit the labour of another portion of the population for their own benefit; that is to say primitive communism is incompatible with feudalism. I shall revert to this question of primitive communism and social evolution, with special reference to the Lepchas, later on in this chapter.

ii

The contemporary reorientation of anthropology can be conviently dated from 1918. This reorientation sprang from a number of different causes and has taken a number of (at any rate superficially) different forms. The 1914–18 war was at least in part responsible for this reorientation, for, through its patent failure to achieve any of its announced results, it produced, at any rate among the technically victorious populations, a doubt and finally a shattering of the nineteenth-century view of social evolution as a single-directioned process, of the synonymity of change and progress. This destruction of European self-complacency was often referred to as 'relativity' or 'a relative view' employing a strained analogy with Einstein's Theory of Relativity, which, somewhat confusedly, appeared to give scientific sanction to modern scepticism. The war was also responsible for the internment of Professor Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands; and this fortuitous circumstance resulted in the longest and most thorough piece of field-work yet performed by a trained ethnologist;[2] and the various monographs on the Trobrianders which the Professor produced after the war established a new and altogether higher standard of anthropological investigation; his work was also symptomatic of the new orientation in taking as its field the whole of adult Trobriand life and not merely the picturesque and formalised elements of it. Parallel advances in sociology and psychology, notably Freudian psychoanalysis,

[2] Of course many writers who have described foreign societies have lived much longer among the people they were describing, notably the Reverend Henri Junod, who spent twenty-five years among the Ba-Thonga; but in all such cases their ethnological work has been subsidiary to their main employment.

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gave the ethnologist new disciplines. It is questionable whether many anthropologists were aware of the progress of genetics; had they been they would have found there too an encouragement for the rejection of the popular nineteenth-century view of evolution as a synonym for progress, for by no means all mutations are eugenic.

As a generalisation it may be said that the rejection of the nineteenth-century views of social evolution has not been followed, as in biology, by an emended version nearer to observable truth; instead the greater number of theoretical anthropologists have abandoned the subject, falling back on to scientific agnosticism. The nineteenth-century anthropologists placed all societies, from the Fuzzy-Wuzzies to their own, on a graded scale; those of the twentieth century tended to put them all on the same level, to claim that there was no essential difference between the Australian Bushmen and England or America, that they were all three discrete cultures of equal validity. Reaction to the extravagances of the diffusionist school led also to a tendency to ignore or gloss over all but the most obvious impacts of one society on another; the post-war view was, to a great extent still is, a picture of the world covered by a great number of discrete cultures of varied size and complication, only comparable in the fact that they were all, in the sum of their attributes, unique. The anthropologists' answer to the questions of social development was a plea of *non possumus*; a culture (this term was preferred to that of a society) was somehow spontaneously generated; all the ethnologist could do was to describe as accurately as possible the culture under investigation with all its interconnecting functions; cultures could be compared to one another on the basis of their treatment of certain aspects of social and human life, such as food-gathering, family life, magic and religion and so on. Some anthropologists appeared to deny even this possibility; since all cultures are unique, and since all social actions are inextricably interwoven, to extract one feature from the whole complex is to distort it, and all that can be compared is the total stress of one culture with that of another.

Since I believe in evolution I do not consider that this atomic view of human societies is complete or adequate; the fact that further knowledge has invalidated the earlier hypotheses of social evolution is not a proper excuse for not trying to form new hypotheses which will take into account the newer sources of knowledge; and in so far as they fail to do this anthropologists are inadequately

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fulfilling their functions. At the same time this scientific agnosticism, this treatment of all societies as being equal and comparable —if only in their uniqueness—has had one extraordinarily valuable result: it has enabled us to gain greater insight into our own society by studying comparable features in other societies. The rejection of the view that contemporary and local behaviour is 'human nature', the acceptance of the equal validity of any society's treatment of any feature of individual and social life has opened up the possibility of studying our own lives, of realising by comparison which of our attitudes and types of behaviour are socially determined, and which biologically. The most notable contribution to this aspect of social knowledge is found in the works of Dr. Margaret Mead; in her very thorough studies of various Pacific societies she has paid special attention to the cultural treatment of certain problems of our own society, notably as to whether the psychological disturbances of puberty are inevitable and biologically determined (*Coming of Age in Samoa*), questions of child development (*Growing Up in New Guinea*) and the correlation between the biological facts of sex and the social characteristics of men and women (*Sex and Temperament in three Primitive Societies*). This elucidation of our own behaviour by the study of other societies is a field of enormous potentialities; the validity of the conclusions drawn inevitably depends on the high accuracy of the general anthropological work.

My own interest in anthropology is primarily due to the fact that it is a discipline capable of enabling us to understand our own society. Although I consider that the careful and accurate description of different societies is a work of great interest and importance, I do not think that I would have gone to the trouble and expense of a long visit to the Himalayas if the only result which I could hope for would be the description of yet another society. I have a certain admiration for those detached scientists who do so, but my interest in anthropology is pragmatic. This does not mean to say that I think the rigorous discipline and methodology of the academic anthropologists can be ignored or relaxed; on the contrary even closer, more accurate and more detailed observation is necessary to study those points which are not formalised in any society. To take a simple example, a generalisation on the treatment of infants needs a very great number of individual observations, far more than on regulated social behaviour; but these observations cannot be published, for they would represent an unreadable list of

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almost identical comments; who would want to read the scores of observations of adults and children which enabled me to write, '(If a Lepcha baby cries) somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this treatment fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom.' I consider it necessary to labour this point because some famous anthropologists who, in their field-work, did not direct their attention to such aspects of social behaviour, have tried to denigrate similar observations on the ground that they were 'unscientific', 'empathy', and so on. If it were not for personal spite it would seem obvious that the treatment of children is as much a part of social behaviour as the treatment of (say) magic, and deductions from the observed treatment of infants in its effect on adult character is as legitimate as deductions on observed magical practices as a function of the culture as a whole.

For a number of years I have been becoming increasingly absorbed in the problem of the individual in society, of the accommodations which people must make to live together in peace, and of the resulting happiness or unhappiness which such accommodations produce. This interest is not merely academical and theoretical: it has been borne increasingly on me that nowadays in Occidental society the lives of most people are relatively unsatisfactory and unsatisfied; part of this discontent is undoubtedly due to the economic maladjustments which the survival of the habits of an age of scarcity to an age of potential plenty make increasingly obvious; but I do not believe that this is the whole of the problem. Contemporary evidence in various countries seems to me to show adequately that changes in the economic and social arrangements will not necessarily remove profound discontent.

It is a truism to say that, once the primary needs of food, warmth and shelter are satisfied, the happiness or unhappiness of the individual depends chiefly on his relationships with the other individuals of the society of which he is a member. It follows that it is necessary to study existing individuals and societies in order to find out whence maladjustments arise, and, if possible, how they can be remedied. The ultimate aim would be to make such studies of our own society, but at present very great difficulties lie in the way; our society is too large for any individual or small group to study as a whole, and there is no sort of agreement as to what would constitute a valid representative sample; and we are all so intimately

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involved in our own society that it would be almost impossible for any observer to be reasonably objective about the society in which he was born. It is possible, however, that the splitting of Occidental society into smaller groups of class and nationality may enable strangers to these smaller groups to investigate them.

Fortunately our own society, though probably the largest and to us infinitely the most important, is not the only one in the world. In decreasing numbers there are, chiefly outside Europe, other groups and societies who have developed their own way of living, their own culture, without regard to or knowledge of Occidental values, each evolving their own unique methods of dealing with the problem of living in society, which is the universal problem of that anti-social gregarious animal, man. A careful study of these different societies in their entirety should give much information on the formation and interaction of various types of social behaviour, especially in the treatment of those biological and psychological urges which would appear to be common to all human beings.

iii

When I visited the Lepchas I had naturally no sort of idea as to what problems the study of their society would illuminate, for it is obviously impossible to know anything of an unknown society until you are in the midst of the investigation. Neither the observations of those Europeans who lived among the Lepchas in the Darjeeling district nor my own casual observations in Kalimpong when I was studying the language prepared me in any way for what I was actually to find in Zongu. Some of the tentative conclusions which I reached in Kalimpong through my contact with missionised Lepchas were profoundly incorrect.

Studying the results presented in the body of this book, it seems to me that Lepcha society raises three questions, one of which I feel that I lack sufficient evidence even to attempt to answer. This question is What has been the result of the impact of their more highly developed neighbours on the Lepchas as a group and as individuals? That the results of this impact have been profound would appear obvious, but lacking accurate knowledge of these neighbours no answer appears at present possible; I regret this, for a knowledge of the effects of culture contact should give valuable information on the probable results of the intentional introduction of social changes in our own society. The other two questions

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raised by the Lepcha material seem to me to be interrelated. They are (1) Why have the Lepchas failed to develop a more advanced, feudal, social organisation, when their neighbours, the Bhutanese, the Nepali and the Tibetans, apparently ethnically similar and in much the same state of material development, have done so? and (2) Why and how have the Lepchas so completely inhibited the expression of overt aggression in individuals?

Engels, following and elaborating Morgan, divided all societies into three main types: barbarism (or gentile societies), feudalism and civilisation (or capitalism). The three progressive types of society are distinguished by increasing productivity of labour, social division of labour, the distribution of private property, and special types of social organisation suitable to each type of society. The progress from feudalism to civilisation (capitalism) has, except in very recent periods, only occurred in Western Europe and is adequately documented by contemporary literary remains and subsequent studies and belongs more properly to the domain of specialised sociology than of anthropology. All societies outside Europe and America (with the exception of Japan, and less certainly, China) can be classified as barbarous or feudal. The term 'barbarous' is an unfortunate one, with its connotations of moral superiority; but it is the only one available, for 'primitive' has been defined to mean 'not normally employing writing' and therefore applies to many feudal as well as all barbarous societies; terms like 'primitive communism' or 'primitive democracy' make possibly unjustified assumptions about pre-feudal societies; and contemporary ethnologists would appear to have so completely neglected this problem that they have not even provided a name to distinguish pre-feudal and feudal societies.

The essence of feudalism, according to Engels (and there seems no reason to object to the definition) is the coming into existence of the state, a more or less centralised organ which controls the activities of the population of the society for the benefit of one portion of that society to the detriment of the other portions: the chief functions of the state are policing, taxation, and the preservation of private property. The dominating group in the state may be the original inhabitants over slaves, conquerors over the conquered, warriors over the rest of the community, or big property owners over the poor; in the last two cases the warriors or big property owners may dominate as a group of equals or the power and property may be concentrated in the hands of a single leader or

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000 king. The essential features of feudalism are an increase in the size of the effective social unit, a centralised organisation capable of controlling individual behaviour without explicit popular consent, and a greater differentiation in the wealth of the ruling class and that of the majority of the population. Engels also adds the change from family (gentile) classification to local classification, but this view is almost certainly not tenable, without modification.

For Engels the outstanding qualities of barbarism (pre-feudalism) were that the social unit was the extended family (or *gens*), or at most the group of *gentes* or *phratry*; the social equality of all members of the *gens*, or at any rate of all the elders or heads of families; the economic self-sufficiency of each social group; the roughly equal division of property within the group, usually coupled with a certain amount of work done and land owned in common either by the household or the extended family; and either the complete absence of class-divisions, or at most very slight distinctions. The typical organisation of barbarous societies is 'primitive democracy', by which is meant that decisions are taken after consultation with all adults, or all adult males, of the group involved; certain people hold authority as priests, war leaders, peace leaders, but this authority is limited, given by consent, and usually elective. Engels also adds that matrilineal preceded patrilineal descent, but here the evidence is not conclusive. He and Morgan further linked with barbarism and feudalism certain types of social (especially sexual) arrangements; but the correlation would appear to be more neat than accurate.

I have thought it necessary to give Engels' definitions before discussing them, as they appear to be practically outlawed from contemporary academic anthropology. As generalised, statistical descriptions of the two types of society his definitions appear to me to be valid, though in individual societies one or more of the features which he distinguishes may be slight or absent. The centralised state and the privileged class are the fundamental features of feudalism, and it seems valuable to distinguish those societies which possess them from those which do not. Engels' descriptions of barbarism and feudalism seem adequate; what I wish to discuss is how, and for what reasons, a given society changes from one form of organisation to the other.

Engels has stated his views of the internal reasons for this transformation. They are first, the increased productivity of labour, the specialisation of labour, the change of consumption goods into

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commodities (the cultivation or creation of food and articles for exchange instead of for consumption by the cultivator or manufacturer), the principle of inheritance and the increasing disproportion of the property in the hands of one group as opposed to the rest of the population. He mentions as a secondary cause the existence of professional warriors under unified leadership who live, and can only live, by booty.

Now I think it would be agreed today that these various factors which Engels considers to be the internal causes of the transformation from barbarism to feudalism would be more properly described as predisposing symptoms. It is obvious that any social modification or transformation is impossible while the average labour of an individual in any given society can only just provide sufficient food for immediate consumption; but when, through the adoption of agriculture and herding, or through improvement in these processes, a greater accumulation of food is possible, there would not seem to be any inevitable reason why this extra food should either be transformed into a commodity or emphasise the difference in property-owning within the society; it can equally well be applied, as it has been applied among the Lepchas, to raising the general standard of living and consumption to a point above the subsistence level. Similarly no society has been discovered without some social division of labour within the operative unit, though in many societies this unit is the household. The principle of inheritance, though it need not be patrilineal nor even individual inheritance, is also found in the great majority of barbarous societies; so is a certain disproportion of property, though among the Lepchas the disproportion, and the incidence of poverty, is rather greater than is usual in societies with parallel family organisation. All the available evidence points to the Lepchas having possessed as many predisposing circumstances for feudalism, for the invention of the state, as their neighbours the Bhutanese, Tibetans and Nepali (or rather the different tribes of Nepal); their country, Sikkim, would indeed appear to have been richer than, at any rate, most of Tibet and Bhutan, for the translation of the Tibetan name for it is 'the rice country'; but there is no sort of evidence to show that the Lepchas at any period of their history developed towards feudalism in any way.

Some theoretical anthropologists, especially those writing in a monarchical society, have assumed that feudalism—the existence of a powerful chief enforcing his rule—was the 'natural' 'original'

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form of human society; they have taken their evidence from the observation of the behaviour of the great apes under captivity, from selected accounts of the behaviour of feudal societies, or from analogies with the contemporary family. The most notable of these theoreticians are Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, and, by implication, Freud in *Totem and Taboo*. I do not think that nowadays anybody would subscribe to this dogma completely, though some people might consider that the existence of chieftainship was 'natural' in certain areas. I do not think even this view is tenable, though a better case could be put up for it; but the case would really depend on giving a variety of meanings to the one word 'chief'; many barbarous societies have headmen, either temporary or permanent, but their power is socially limited and they can only exercise their chieftainship through the consent of the rest of the community; the essential difference between feudalism and barbarism, when both societies possess chiefs, is the question whether the chief has any means of enforcing his power without the expressed consent of the rest of the population.

It may be considered that this argument is an exclusively theoretical discussion; I consider on the contrary that its complete elucidation would throw much light on the evolution of human societies; the progress from feudalism, the coming into being of the state, to the most elaborate of contemporary societies is a single and, in its main lines, comprehensible process; the transition from the tribe (barbarism) to the state (feudalism) is on the other hand still extremely obscure; but this transition is, in its effect, the most revolutionary in the social history of man; the invention of the state is, if not the origin, the cause of great acceleration of material and social progress; the only possible parallel to the transition from barbarism to feudalism would be the transition from civilisation (capitalism) to some classless society. If we can understand how the one came about, we may learn something about how the other may come about.

I have already listed the causes Engels gives for the internal transformation; that they are predisposing symptoms and not causes is I think adequately illustrated by the Ifugao[2] of the Philippine Islands. These people have all the prerequisites of feudalism, including an economic stratification more marked than in almost

[2] See, among the other literature on this people, R. F. Barton's *Ifugao Law and Custom* and *Ifugao Economics* (University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. 15, nos. 1 and 5, 1922).

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any feudal system outside Europe; but they have not achieved feudalism; they have no central authority.

I should like to suggest that, given the necessary economic and material development, there are two interdependent essential conditions for the transformation from barbarism to feudalism: they are, the existence and encouragement of competition within the social group, and more or less prolonged and intimate contact with members of another group. Both of these circumstances must always be present: unless a struggle for individual distinction within the group already exists, the presence of members of another group will not produce feudalism; if the individual rivalry exists and there is no or little contact with members of another group the transformation will also not take place.

The precipitating cause of feudalism would appear to be war, whether the victors settle in the conquered country or take back to their own country slaves in relatively large quantities; the two groups living together in the same area render the invention of an apparatus of social control necessary. In the case of an aggressive group invading a non-aggressive one the invaders may represent a very small portion of the entire population; the slaves imported into the home territory must on the other hand be a relatively large portion of the population to render such a transformation necessary. In Athens, for example, they very considerably overnumbered the Athenians.

It is possible, indeed probable, that the existence of a feudal state in a given area will, through its example, cause the conversion to feudalism of its barbarous neighbours; but that this does not inevitably take place can be proved from West Africa where fairly highly developed feudal states existed side by side with barbarous societies, as well as by the Lepchas who live and lived entirely surrounded by feudalism.

It is obvious that in a society composed of two diverse groups with separate cultures, the chances of the survival of the culture of the conquered is small, unless there is very great disproportion between the numbers of the conquerors and conquered; and, even in such cases, unless the conquerors are very quickly absorbed by the conquered, the culture of the conquered will be progressively modified by external authority. It therefore follows that, for the group considered as an entity, internal competition and rivalry is a eugenic[4]

[4] In this chapter I am using the terms *eugenic* and *dysgenic* figuratively, to describe the qualities which conduce to the survival or disappearance of the

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000 quality; for if the existence of internal competition is a necessary preliminary to conquest (and it would seen inevitable that this must be so: aggressive wars can only be waged for extra booty or prestige on the part of individuals before the existence of the state) then the absence of internal competition is dysgenic as soon as the group which discourages it comes into contact with an aggressive group. As far as groups are concerned the process of civilisation could be described as a constant selection in favour of aggressiveness. Up till now aggressiveness has had a very definite survival value; so in their time did the mammoth's or the sabre-toothed tiger's tusks.

121 It may be argued that the Lepchas did not themselves develop feudalism because they have been conquered and are now the subordinate part of a feudal state; but that is no explanation of the fact that they have developed no form of organisation which would possibly be capable of developing into feudalism. Their neighbours the Nepali appear to have lived under the dominion of foreign (and therefore invading) kings from China and India for nearly two thousand years; in the early eighteenth century the Gurkhas nevertheless developed a complete feudal state.

So far have the Lepchas been from developing towards feudalism that there is no sort of native tradition of any historical or heroic chief; their biggest unit seems always to have been the village (or *ptso*—extended family group—if the *ptso* was, as seems possible, at one time a geographical unit) and one of the greatest weaknesses of their existing social organisation is the very limited power of control which the Mandal of one village can exercise over inhabitants of other villages.[5]

If my argument has been correct, the reason why the Lepchas never developed towards feudalism despite apparently adequate predisposing material conditions was that they did not sufficiently develop within their society competition and aggression. It is

society as a unit. By analogy I am comparing societies with animal species, but I do not wish to suggest that in any way their survival or disappearance is genetically determined. It is obvious that a conquered people, though they lose their specific culture, may be more fertile than their conquerors, and so from a biological viewpoint conquest may be eugenic.

[5] A case in point is the destitution of Kurma's mother after the death of her first husband, when the Mandal and people of Lingthem were unable to force the 'husband's younger brother', who should have inherited and supported her, to marry her because he lived under another Mandal. See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 388 and 394.

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necessary for some portion of a society to wish for power and distinction, for property and prestige, if the whole society is to develop a more elaborate form, feudalism. Engels and Morgan appear to have believed either that the transformation was an automatic ('historical' is their favourite synonym) process developing spontaneously from the change in the productive power of labour, or else that mankind was 'naturally' acquisitive and competitive. But feudalism means an increase in the size of the social group, and that increase can only, in the long run, be accomplished at the expense of other groups. Social evolution and the survival of certain groups is dependent, ultimately, on the amount of permissive internal competition and aggression; if the permissive aggression is excessive the society will be liable to fissurate and split into a number of internecine groups, incapable of combination; if it is defective the society will have no pattern for resisting alien intrusion. Save in the exceptional case when a materially primitive society comes into conflict with a materially advanced one social evolution is selective in favour of societies with an optimum number of aggressive individuals.

iv

One of the most futile and popular subjects of discussion is the nature and characteristics of the 'natural' man; in the course of two centuries philosophers and polemists have endowed this unfortunate abstraction with every sort of contradictory quality, according to the point which they wished to make. The subject is futile, for it is impossible to conceive man apart from some sort of society, no matter how small and undeveloped; as an animal man is born with certain biological urges and appetites, but the expression which these urges and appetites will assume is to a very great extent socially determined. As an animal man has to feed himself and to reproduce himself; what food he will eat and what mate he will get will be to a very great extent determined by the society of which he is a member.

It has seemed worth while to repeat this truism because the question of aggression, and especially the social control of aggression, is one which has been singularly neglected both by psychologists and sociologists. One of the reasons for this neglect is probably the fact that all the writers on such subjects were members of states, and one of the chief laws of any state is that the social control of aggression is the business of the state, and not of the

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individual nor of the social group, apart from the specialised police. The chief function of police indeed is to ensure that aggression, whether directed against other members of the group or against property, should not go beyond socially limited points. The theory of the policed state assumes the existence of aggression which can only be inhibited by external force; and people writing in such states about man in pre-police societies have been inclined to endow this primitive man with the almost uninhibited expression of aggression: 'man is "naturally" a fighter', is '"naturally" jealous and possessive', the 'strongest male "naturally" obtains possession of all the females'. More sophisticated writers have seen that this 'natural' free vent to all aggressive instincts would completely prevent the establishment of any form of society, and they therefore date the origin of society from the drastic overcoming of this free expression of aggression, particularly the aggressive jealousy of adult males; Morgan and Engels posit as a solution the invention of 'group marriage', Freud the mutual blackmailing and guilt-feelings of brothers who have conspired together to kill and eat an over-aggressive and over-possessive father. As universal solutions both suggestions suffer through their inherent improbability as well as leaving the pre-existing situation as vague as ever. Although an approximation to strict and lifelong monogamy is probably historically very modern, it seems doubtful whether the food-gathering conditions under which mankind presumably originally lived would have supported sufficient adults in a small area to have made group marriage feasible.

The very general assumption of 'natural' uncontrollable and murderous jealousy on the part of males is an interesting one; although sexual jealousy is quite common, there are a number of societies—for instance, the Eskimos, the Lepchas, and some American Indian societies—where it receives little or no *social* expression. A very great number of primitive societies implicitly distinguish between woman as a sexual object and woman as a worker and helper, and of the societies which do make this distinction the majority lay the social emphasis on the working functions of the women; in such societies the jealousy situation arises if one man tries to entice away another's worker, and not primarily for sexual reasons.

W. G. Sumner in his *Folkways* implies that individuals have to exteriorise a certain fixed amount of aggression, but that this aggression can be directed inside or outside the group: 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and

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war towards other-groups are correlative to each other.' Though 500
this generalisation may be often true it is obviously not universally so; if it were, isolated peoples, those living on islands, for instance, would be in a state of constant internecine hostility since they have no other-group within striking distance. His assumption that the natural state of primitive society is constant warfare[6] also seems not to be borne out by the evidence. The considerable agreement of theorists of very different schools and disciplines on the natural aggressiveness of primitive man is very striking.[7]

Now I think this confusion—for confusion it is—arises from two sources; first the lumping together of all analphabetic societies as primitive, and secondly giving too restricted an interpretation of the term aggression. If I am correct in considering some sort of war the precipitating cause of feudalism then overt aggression (in the popular sense in which I have so far been using the word) will to a greater or less extent be a feature of at any rate the dominant group in feudal societies. In barbarous (pre-feudal) societies the permissive expression of overt aggression is I think liable to be correlated with the chief types of food and valuables and the amount of leisure possible for at any rate a certain portion of the society. People dependent entirely or chiefly on vegetable food, whether gathered or cultivated, will have less obvious cause for aggression outside the group than those dependent on animals; however many domestic animals you possess stolen animals can still constitute a useful addition to your property; if you have as much land as you can cultivate extra land is merely an added burden. As a generalisation it may also be said that the amount of game in any given piece of land is more limited than the amount of vegetable food; if double the number of people hunt over a given territory they are far more likely to exhaust the supply of game, than double the number of people gathering vegetable produce are likely to exhaust the supply of fruit, etc. Herders, of course, have far more leisure than agriculturists. I am not suggesting that all carnivorous societies are war-like, and all vegetarian ones peaceful, but only that societies in which animals are important have more obvious cause for

[6] '(The group's) relation to all outsiders, or other groups, is one of war and plunder, except so far as agreements have modified it.' *Folkways*, p. 12.

[7] For a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory of the aggressiveness of primitive man see A. Machin's *Darwin's Theory Applied to Mankind* (London: Longman's 1937). This book is an elaborate fantasia based on a hypothetical anti-social primitive hunter 'red in tooth and claw', and is superbly untouched by scientific genetics or modern ethnology.

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offensive and defensive warfare; whether they develop this form of social behaviour would appear to depend to a great extent on the density of population in a given area. When agriculture has developed so far that one man's labour can produce sufficient food for more than the labourer (and his immediate dependents) slave-raiding becomes an economic proposition.

So far we have been considering aggression in its purely destructive aspect of fighting, competition and destruction. But I think that is far too narrow a definition of the term and that destruction and rivalry are only two of the aspects of aggression. I should like to suggest that aggression should be defined as one aspect of *the urge to obtain mastery over the environment*; this urge is universal, but the strength with which it is manifested depends on the individual temperament, and the forms its overt expression takes depend partly on the material circumstances and partly on the social organisation in which the individual is born. Aggression or mastery can be manifested towards objects and ideas (the supernatural, for example) as well as towards people, and it can be constructive or destructive; there is as much release of aggression in building or creating as in destroying.

121 With this wider definition of aggression Sumner's hypothesis that each society (or rather the individuals composing it) have to
152 externalise a certain amount of aggression takes on an added validity; but his 'other-groups' must be redefined to mean the external world and the supernatural, and not merely members of other societies. I should like to suggest the generalisation that the amount of destructive aggression manifested towards other men in primtiive societies is negatively correlated with the difficulty of maintaining life in the given physical environment or social organisation. In other words the harder the environment and the less material development there is, the less will destructive aggression be overtly manifested. Socially allowed destructive aggression is the product of economic security and leisure. If I am correct in this statement the type picture of the earliest men as uninhibitedly destructive and jealous until they were made tolerant, will have to be changed to that of hard-working and generally socially unaggressive men developing jealousy and fighting as they acquired control over their food supply and the dangerous animals in the environment. If this statement is correct the Lepchas' failure to develop any pattern of external aggression may be considered to have been conditioned by their isolation, their low material development, and the difficulties

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of wresting a livelihood from their environment. It would seem probable also that the environment has been responsible for keeping the operative social group a small one and in that respect may have been a reinforcing cause of the Lepchas' failure to develop towards feudalism. The small local and kinship group is now firmly implanted in Lepcha culture and it is interesting to note how, under contemporary settled conditions, the Lepchas still oppose all attempts to weld them into bigger units; their treatment of the new office of Muktair,[8] even though it was created by the powerful Court, is extremely illuminating.

121
152

V

The reasons given above for the Lepchas' lack of destructive aggression outside their group may be adequate; the lack of aggression inside the group cannot be explained in such general terms. It is possible that since, in their major occupation of getting food, the Lepchas felt themselves more opposed by natural phenomena (personified into supernatural forces) than by other men, they to a certain extent carried the same attitude into their social life and regarded the supernatural, and not their fellows, as their chief cause for discontent. From the common-sense point of view it could be argued, as Sumner suggests, that in the small groups of which Lepcha society was composed the value of each individual worker was so great to the group as a whole that all potentially aggressive situations whereby the group might be threatened with the loss of the worker had to be avoided. Unfortunately it cannot be assumed of any human group that they act on common-sense reasons.

Though the reasons for the Lepchas' almost complete suppression of destructive aggression within their group would appear to be impossible to discover, it may be worth while noting their methods of doing so. This suppression of aggression can be viewed from two aspects: there are the social rules for its control, and there is the treatment of the new recruits to the society, the babies. From the social point of view, the most obvious is their strong social sanction against quarrelling; the Lepchas have not admitted a single situation in which quarrelling or vengeance-seeking is permissible. This may be regarded as a legal sanction against quarrelling. Next in importance from the legal point of view is the social arrangement of all sexual relationships so as to exclude jealousy. These arrangements have been detailed in Chapter Six but

[8] See Chapter Five, pp. 123–126.

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121 may be briefly recapitulated. Parents have no rôle in the sexual life
of their children; exclusive sexual possession is legally impossible;
152 the younger are favoured against the elder (since they have access to their elders' spouses) and the elder are prevented from overbearing the younger by the equation of ' younger siblings' ' spouses with children-in-law. Although nowadays not fully employed they have the legal device of repairing unsatisfactory marriages without the enmity of the two groups involved by exchanging the unsatisfactory spouse for another member of the same group.

In the Lepcha treatment of young children there seem to me to be two constant stresses of almost equal importance for the avoidance of overt aggression. One of these stresses has been already fully documented in Chapter Eleven; it is the immediate and willing satisfaction of all the infant's expressed physical desires. Save under exceptional circumstances, or through illness, the Lepcha infant does not apparently suffer to any appreciable extent from hunger, discomfort or cold. From the point of view of physical well-being Lepcha babies appear to experience the minimum of frustration and therefore it would seem that in the first months of life there are few experiences to evoke aggression. But parallel with this gratification of physiological appetites there is the considerable physical restraint which the babies endure through passing the majority of their waking hours firmly tied to the back of their guardian, and also the complete lack of encouragement which their elders give to the babies' earlier self-maximating activities and attempts to acquire body techniques and physical independence. Young babies get no social approval from their attempts to crawl and walk; on the contrary a mobile baby is more likely to be picked up and replaced on its guardian's back, since it is there easier to control. The two methods by which babies in our society would appear to win adult approval in their second year are successful sphincter control and the acquirement of body techniques and speech. Sphincter control is paid little attention to by adult Lepchas until a considerably later age, and attempts at acquiring body techniques are met with, at the best, indifference. Very young the Lepcha baby learns that social approval is to be obtained, not by self-assertion, but by passivity. The baby's self-maximating efforts are not actively punished, but they are discouraged by indifference; its passivity and conformity are constantly rewarded.

I think it is legitimate to trace a connection between this partial extinction of self-assertion in early childhood and the adult Lepcha's

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tendency to judge their fellows in their rôle of members of society, 121
and not as personalities. This impersonal attitude to their fellows 152
seems to me the chief operative factor for the suppression of competition and aggression in adult life. The Lepchas stress constantly social behaviour and minimise individual character variations. They stress the resemblance between individuals, they minimise their differences. This constant stress on the resemblance of individuals obviously makes for a low development of the ego, a lack of internal competition, a lack of contrast. The Lepchas minimise the most obvious contrasts, between rich and poor, between men and women, between lamas and illiterate laymen, to a great extent between adults and children. They recognise no social goals which can only be achieved at the expense of others, they have no social situations which separate rights and duties.

Although, as I have shown, this lack of personal aggression is dysgenic in the Lepchas' state of social development, the excess of personal and national aggression appears to be equally dysgenic in our own state of social development. To minimise this aggression will it be necessary for us too to view our neighbours impersonally, to tone down all the contrasts in personality, talent and achievement which have resulted in the greatest glories as well as the greatest horrors of our society? Or is there another solution?

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Appendices

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APPENDIX I

(a) VITAL STATISTICS OF LINGTHEM

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IN Lingthem it was—very exceptionally for a primitive community—possible to get the exact age of every member of the community. This was possible because it is essential for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year cycle they were born in for future horoscopes and divinations. They know also how many cycles they have completed because, after the completion of the third or fourth cycle—that is to say after the age of thirty-six or forty-eight—it is necessary to make a prophetic consultation with the lamas at the beginning of each new cycle—i.e. at the age of forty-eight, sixty, seventy-two, etc.—and all remember how many consultations they have made. Only in the case of two old widowed women am I in any doubt as to the accuracy of the data. This census was taken in April 1937.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION BY SEX IN TEN-YEAR GROUPS

Age	*Males*	*Females*
90–81	3	1
80–71	3	4
70–61	5	5
60–51	10	6
50–41	13	13
40–31	8	11
30–21	19	16
20–11	18	11
10– 1	10	20

TOTAL POPULATION	176
MALES	89
FEMALES	87

Median age for the population	28—year 1909
Median age for males	29—year 1908
Median age for females	28—year 1909

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

TABLE I

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

Year of birth	*Males*	*Females*	*Year of birth*	*Males*	*Females*
1847	1	–	1892	–	1
1848	–	–	1893	2	1
1849	–	–	1894	–	1
1850	–	–	1895	–	–
1851	–	–	1896	3	3
1852	1	1	1897	–	1
1853	–	–	1898	–	–
1854	–	–	1899	–	2
1855	1	–	1900	3	2
1856	–	–	1901	1	1
1857	1	–	1902	2	1
1858	–	1	1903	–	–
1859	–	–	1904	–	–
1860	1	–	1905	–	1
1861	–	–	1906	2	3
1862	–	–	1907	1	–
1863	–	1	1908	5	1
1864	–	1	1909	–	5
1865	–	–	1910	4	–
1866	1	1	1911	–	3
1867	–	–	1912	3	4
1868	1	–	1913	–	–
1869	–	–	1914	5	2
1870	1	1	1915	1	1
1871	1	1	1916	–	–
1872	–	–	1917	1	–
1873	–	1	1918	1	1
1874	1	–	1919	4	1
1875	1	2	1920	1	1
1876	–	–	1921	2	1
1877	1	2	1922	2	2
1878	3	–	1923	2	1
1879	–	–	1924	1	–
1880	1	–	1925	1	2
1881	1	1	1926	3	2
1882	1	–	1927	1	–
1883	–	1	1928	2	2
1884	1	1	1929	–	–
1885	1	1	1930	–	6
1886	1	–	1931	–	–
1887	1	1	1932	–	–
1888	3	1	1933	2	5
1889	1	1	1934	4	2
1890	2	1	1935	1	4
1891	1	3	1936	–	1

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

TABLE III

FECUNDITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

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The Lepchas are mainly exogamous: that is to say by far the greater number of women in the community have come in from outside, and by far the greater number of girls will marry into other villages. In the second column the following signs are used:

L—from Lingthem or the other smaller villages under Chala Mandal.

Z—from Zongu, the Lepcha reserve in which Lingthem is situated. Taking the average number of inhabitants per household in Lingthem —5.3—as valid for the whole area, the total population of Zongu is about 2000.

X—Lepcha from outside Zongu.

XX—Partly Sikkimese.

The question marks in this column indicate that I could not discover if the women were born inside or outside Zongu. None of the women so marked are from Lingthem, nor have any admixture of foreign blood.

It is probable that the number of children who have died in infancy is an understatement, as the Lepchas attach little emotional importance to children dying very young and may forget about them. Of the sterile women under sixty, I am certain, however, that they have never borne a child alive or dead.

sb. in columns 5 and 6 stands for a still-born child.

P. in column 7 means that the woman was pregnant in April 1937.

Date of birth	*Place of origin*	*Live children* M	*Live children* F	*Dead children* M	*Dead children* F	*Age at birth of first child*
1852	?	1	1	1	?	?
1858	L	1	?	?	?	?
1863	?	2	4	1	1	?
1864	?	?	?	?	?	?
1866	?	1	?	?	?	?
1870	Z	1	–	1	–	?30
1871	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1871	L	–	–	–	–	–
1873	L	–	1	2	–	?
1875	Z	2	1	1	–	?
1875	?	–	–	–	–	–
1877	X	–	–	1	1	?
1877	X	–	–	–	–	–
1881	Z	–	3	1	–	?
1883	Z	2	3	1	–	19
1884	X	–	–	2	–	?
1885	Z	2	3	–	–	?
1887	Z	3	1	–	–	24

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Date of birth	Place of origin	Live children M	Live children F	Dead children M	Dead children F	Age at birth of first child
1888	Z	3	2	–	–	20
1889	?	–	–	2	2	?
1890	L	–	–	–	–	–
1891	L	–	–	–	–	–
1891	X	–	–	–	–	–
1891	?	–	–	–	2	?20
1892	L	–	–	–	–	–
1893	L	–	3	3	3	22
1894	X	–	–	–	–	–
1896	X	1	–	sb	–	23
1896	Z	–	–	–	sb	–
1896	?	2	–	?2	?3	?25
1897	?	–	–	–	–	–
1899	Z	1	4	–	–	22
1899	L	2	1	1	–	20
1900	L	–	–	–	–	–
1900	Z	1	2	sb	–	23P
1901	Z	–	2	1	1	?25
1902	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1905	Z	2	1	–	–	19
1906	Z	1	–	?	?	?29
1906	L	1	3	–	–	17
1906	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1908	Z	1	2	–	sb	22
1909	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1909	X	–	–	–	–	–
1909	Z	–	3	–	–	22
1909	X	–	2	1	–	21
1909	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1911	Z	–	1	–	–	25
1911	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1911	L	–	–	–	–	P[1]
1912	X	1	–	–	–	22
1912	L	–	–	–	–	–
1912	X	1	–	–	–	20
1912	XX	1	–	–	–	22
1914	Z	1	–	sb	–	20P
1914	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1915	Z	(widow—unknown recently arrived)				
1918	L	–	–	–	–	–
1919	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1920	Z	–	–	–	–	–

[1] This woman was subsequently successfully delivered of a boy.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

(b) PLAN OF THE VILLAGE OF LINGTHEM

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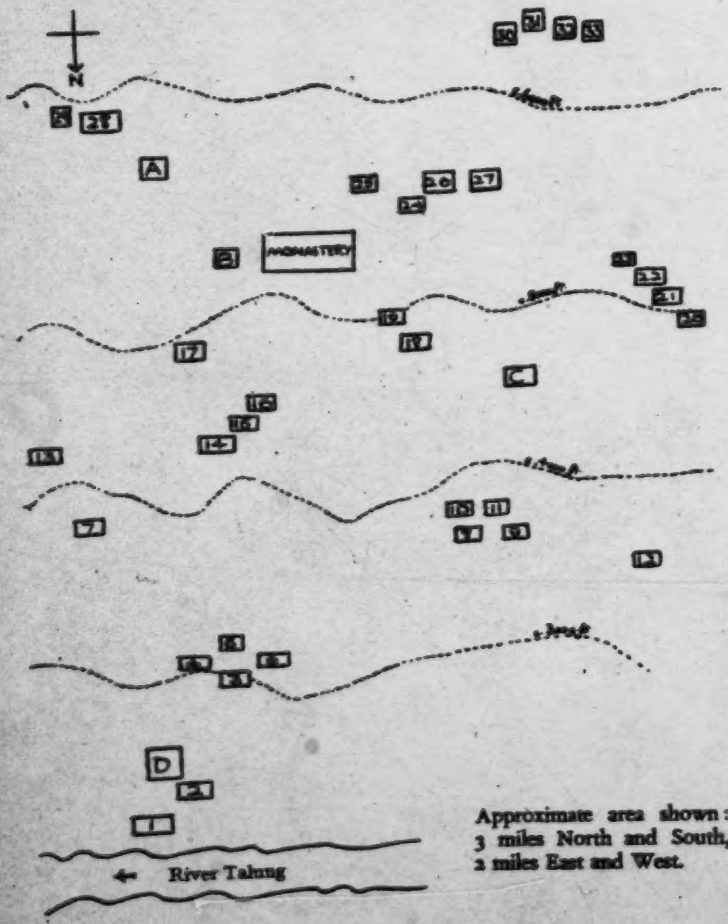
The accompanying plan shows schematically the distribution of houses in Lingthem. They are all situated on the northern slope of the mountain rising steeply from the River Talung. The numbers are for reference to the accompanying table of householders. B is the house of the monastery guardian. A, C and D are field-houses permanently inhabited by part of the household.



Approximate area shown: 3 miles North and South, 2 miles East and West.

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TABLE IV

LIST OF HOUSEHOLDERS

(arranged by PTSO (patrilineal clan) and showing composition of household)

House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
JAMYONG PTSO					
3	CHALA MANDAL	3	2	–	1
4	Chano	1	1	3	1
12	Asang	2	3	2	2
16	Chinya	2	1	–	–
18	Kahlyeu	1	1	1	–
23	Aga	1	3	1	2
27	Nariya	2	2	–	–
29	Ongden	3	2	2	3
30	Ashyok	3	2	–	–
31	Chelim	1	2	1	1
33	Tingkep	2	2	2	–
ZUMCHYONG PTSO					
9	Nahyeun	1	1	–	–
17	Tafoor	3	3	3	5
25	Kaji	2	2	–	–
28	Dunbi	1	1	–	1
32	Takneum	2	3	3	–
TAMSANG PTSO					
5	Thyak Thimbu	2	2	–	–
6	Gongyop	4	2	–	–
11	Zumba	2	2	–	–
PAKI PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
1	Kurma	2	1	–	1
22	Také	3	2	–	–
SAKMI PTSO					
10	Pembu	1	1	1	–
21	Datoop	2	1	1	–
A	First Dorjé Lapoon	2	–	–	–
ARAM PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
19	Tempa	1	2	–	2
20	Patek	2	4	1	–
B	Pongring	1	–	–	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
ARAM PANDJET PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
7	Takal	1	1	–	–
26	Lumba	2	2	–	–
C	Lumba's elder wife	–	1	1	–
DEMIK PTSO					
13	Katel	1	2	1	1
KALONG KANDONG PTSO					
2	Songpo	1	1	–	–
D	Nakleup (son of Songpo)	1	1	–	–
LUBDONG RABJI PTSO					
8	Pargeut	1	2	1	4
TAKPO PTSO					
14	Tobgé (has left house to live with Jiroong)				
24	Jiroong	2	2	1	2
TSELTELIM PTSO					
15	Serving	2	1	1	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

[p. 462 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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APPENDIX II

LEPCHA KINSHIP TERMS

(N.B. *m.s.* means 'man speaking'; *w.s.* 'woman speaking'.)

Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
2nd generation ascendant		
THI-KUNG	grandfather	father of spouse, elder brother of spouse, spouse's elder sister's husband, after the birth of a child. *also* any man irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is two generations nearer this ancestor than the speaker. *also* the Old Man in folktales and mythology.
NYI-KUNG	grandmother	(as for Thi-kung for all women)
1st generation ascendant		
A-BO	father	father of spouse; elder brother of spouse (w.s.) husband of elder sister of spouse (w.s.) before birth of child. *also* ingzong (trading friend) of husband (w.s.) *also* respectfully to affinal relations and unrelated people slightly older than speaker.
A-BO THIMBU (contracted to BATHIM)	big father	(1) elder co-husband. (2) father's elder brother: always used if the two brothers live in the same house or neighbourhood, not usually if they live in different villages.
A-BO CHIMBU	little father	(1) younger co-husband. (2) father's younger brother: only used if the two brothers live in the same house.
A-MU	mother	husband's mother (w.s.) wife of husband's elder brother before birth of child (w.s.) *also* wife of ingzong (m.s.) *also* respectfully to slightly older affinal or unrelated women.

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Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
A-MU THIMBU (contracted to MATHIM)	big mother	(1) elder co-wife. (2) wife of father's elder brother. (3) elder sister of father or mother if living in same house or neighbourhood.
A-MU CHIMBU	little mother	(1) younger co-wife. (N.B. 'little mother' is nearly always the biological mother of the children where there are co-wives.) (2) wife of father's younger brother: only used if living chiefly in same house as speaker.
A-KU	father's (younger) brother	any man whom father calls 'brother'. any male irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker. Any man mother calls 'aku'.
A-JONG	mother's brother	may be, but is not always, applied to any man one generation older than speaker whose relationship, however distant, is traced through a woman.
A-NYOU	lady	(1) younger sister of parent; *also* any woman whom father or mother calls 'sister'; *also* any woman irrespective of age who traces a relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker; *also* the most respectful form of address to any socially superior woman: is used as a title for female supernaturals and Queens. (2) mother of wife (m.s.) elder sister of wife (m.s.).
A-ZONG / OONG-OP	levirate or sororate spouse	*man speaking:* wife of younger brothers of father or mother, of any man called 'aku' or 'ajong'; wife of elder brother; younger sister of wife. *woman speaking:* younger brother of husband; son of husband's elder brother; men husband calls 'younger brother'; son of men husband calls 'elder brother' or 'younger brother' (except his biological younger brothers); husband of elder sister. (note AZONG is more commonly used when there is a generation between the speakers; OONG-OP when they are of the same generation, but there is no uniformity about this. The terms are reciprocal.)

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Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
Ego's generation		
A-NUM	elder brother	any male of ego's generation older than ego and tracing descent back to a common ancestor on either side. (Not always used if the common ancestor is more than four generations removed and the two speakers are not of the same *ptso*,) any otherwise unplaced male of ego's apparent age.
A-NOM	elder sister	(as for A-NUM for women.)
ING	younger sibling	(as for A-NUM for people of either sex younger than ego.)
A-VO	husband	
A-YOU	wife	
BRI-BO / BRI-MU	'marriage father' / 'marriage mother'	used reciprocally by the parents of a married couple.
ONG-ZONG	sibling of spouse / spouse of sibling	used reciprocally by all siblings of the same sex of a married pair. Thus if A (man) marries B (woman) A will call all B's brothers 'ongzong', and B's brothers will call A and his brothers 'ongzong'. Similarly B will so name all A's sisters who will call B and her sisters 'ongzong'; unless they live in the same house or neighbourhood when see above Thi-kung, Nyi-kung, A-bo, A-mu.
1st generation descendant		
ING-HA	infant	any young child.
A-KUP	child	any child.
NYOM	son's wife	*man speaking*: wife of younger brother; wife of sibling's son; *also* bride.
MYOK	daughter's husband	*woman speaking*: husband of younger sister; husband of sibling's daughter; *also* bridegroom.
NAM-KUP	child of sibling	the child of anybody ego or spouse calls 'brother' or 'sister'.
2nd generation descendant		
KUP-ZONG	grandchild	any child two generations younger than ego, unless alternative classification allows the use of a kinship term of an elder generation.

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Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
Other common terms of address		
A-THING	lord	the most respectful term for a man; used for high officials and male supernaturals.
A-NYOU	lady	the female equivalent to A-thing.
REN (plural) REN-SONG	old man	the usual courtesy form of address to any man or mixed group not markedly younger than speaker.
A-NUM	elder brother	less respectful than the last two terms. generally used to unclassified people of about ego's age, particularly with a view to sexual advances. ING is not used in this way.
A-NOM	elder sister	
Descriptive terms not used in address		
A-FET	father of spouse	also husband of wife's elder sister (m.s.) and wife's elder brother (m.s.).
TAGRI KUP	male child	son.
TA-YOU KUP	female child	daughter.
FLENG	young man	(literally, not having yet produced children.)
NUM-LENG	young woman	
ABO PAYAR	step-father	
AMU PAYAR	step-mother	
JIUT-BO	adopting mother	
JIUT-MU	adopting father	
NUM-NEU	blood relation	(implying a person with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous.)
NUM-NEU-ZONG	relatives	all the people with whom relation by descent can be traced.
PA-MING	brothers	a collective word meaning either all true siblings or more usually all the males the person referred to calls ANUM and ING.
M'SUNG-MU	sisters	(parallel to PA-MING, but referring exclusively to women and usually employed by women.)

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APPENDIX III

(a) Birth Horoscope

(Towards the end of my stay in Lingthem since the children whose birth we expected did not arrive I persuaded Tafoor to cast the horoscope of an imaginary child born at six o'clock in the morning of Sunday, May 16th, 1937, which is in Tibetan on the 6th day of Gubu, Ox year (*long nam*) and Fire year (*mi nam*). Nowadays Tafoor casts most of the horoscopes; the other two lamas who know how to are the two Dorjé Lapoon.) 787

BIRTH. KITSEN.

Long nam (12-year cycle). The child will insult others; will sleep continuously; will soil its bedding; will be a naughty child. Will be very talkative and curious, prying into other people's business. He will be quarrelsome and inclined to fight; will have dreams of destroying the whole world. Will only think of himself and won't do good to others, will be a bold-faced speaker. Will pretend to knowledge that he does not possess.

Mi nam (10-year cycle). If he has a very big body he will have some defect; he will be blind or deaf or will limp, or something like that. He will eat a great deal. He will live to the age of seventy-one, if he manages to pass the eight hazards (*parchet*) which lie in front of him. He will suffer from a cold and cough almost at once. Any fields or animals in his name will prosper. He will be troubled by Ginoo *moong* (jealousy). He will have one son and two daughters. He will suffer from pain in the heart.

Mariwā.[1] His number is eight *nirça gumma*. In his last incarnation he was

[1] This is a calculation for the year and also for the day based on the magic square. Each year has its own Mariwā with a different arrangement of numbers and a different centre number and colour which counts as the principle of the year; the day of the month is reckoned starting from the centre and then with the number above and then clockwise round. Each number has a constant colour. Thus for *long nam* the whole year is 9 and red and the sixth is 5 and yellow. There are nine different Mariwā which produces an independent 9-year cycle.

a puppy; his owners were *ginoo-chen* (very greedy people). When he grows up he will not lose money, he will prosper. He will be miserly and won't even give to beggars. He will be a very fecund speaker. He will get goods from others without paying for them—property and lots of clothes. Should people give him a black cloth or black thread or a black hat Chumjé *moong* (this is the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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same as num-een *moong*) will follow the gift and will trouble him and his children will die. He will have no desire for food. He won't build his own house; he will live with and on others and will make others work for him. He will be envious of others and will try to acquire their property and their clothes. He will try to make others work for him and will get property from others. He will rejoice in the presence of learned lamas. His birth will cause his parents *yong nyom* (general loss); therefore they must perform the ceremony of *yong-keuk*; should they fail to do so he will either die young or be like a beggar.[2] When he grows up he must give many feasts. If he learns to be a

[2] Tafoor added 'Like Sangkyar, this prediction was made for him; his parents did not do the ceremony and see him now!'

lama then in his next incarnation he will be a man so rich that he won't have to work and he will have very many relatives. He has a mole either on his head or on his waist.

Day of the week—Sunday. If he doesn't die on the seventh day or in the seventh month he will live to be seventy-one. He will honour his parents and superiors. His wife will be the daughter of a rich man.

Sahor—Stars. There are thirteen stars. Should he die at the age of twenty-eight it will be because he has to fulfil the gap in some previous reincarnation. He will dance and sing. He will have a loud voice—louder than cymbals—especially when he has drunk. He likes to possess good food and drink and dress; he does not care for other people and will be envious of their prosperity. He will not tell lies. Nobody will be able to argue with him or quarrel with him; he will be able to crush everybody verbally. He will covet all pretty women. He will have a bad eye and pains in the body and limbs.

Satarr—auspices of the day. He will be a great speaker and explainer.

Tendré—birth number. Tendré sipa. Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year he will be the head of a big village. He will be wealthy and will have no diseases. If people think bad things about him they will not dare say it to him. He will be given poison which will cause his death on Sunday at twelve o'clock midday.

Body sign. He was born at the sixth hour and therefore the sign is on his heart and he will be very rich.

Name. Karma Tsu-Ten. This is a holy name and must not be told to others.

. . . . . .

Notes: The horoscopes for all children born on the same day are identical except for the signs which depend on the hour. The apparent contradictions are reconciled by the fact that all statements are contingent: i.e. he will have good health except for the diseases mentioned; he will have no appetite but will covet other people's food and will eat out of greediness . . . etc. 'Every word is true.'

. . . . . .

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(*b*) Marriage Horoscopes

Forecast of marriage of Tafoor. Tiger and Water year, and his wife, Horse and Fire year. 787 534

O X wife will die before husband
O O both will have good health
O
O O They will have many children
O X their property will be moderate only
X X they will have short lives
O X if his wife is ill he will be able to help her.

For another marriage, the man Dog year and Iron year, the woman Ox year and Water year.

O
O O both will live long
X
X O but their health will be indifferent
O O they will be very rich
O O exorcism will be successful for them
X but their children will die.

(*c*) Death Horoscope

(This is also an imaginary horoscope for a man aged seventy-three and therefore *kalok nam*—Rat year—dying on Sunday, 16th May.) 787

Sooksa dyeu adum nyetka mak—time of death. Died from being given *chiptsok*—unclean food. His soul is being eaten by Tseng and Gebu supernaturals. Before his death there was an evil sign such as a python in the house or a cock crowing at night, or a big tree falling tip towards the house, or a fireplace falling through on to the earth.

Lyoo deu anok kat (' The lake of his soul was dry '). Much property was expended over his illness. His death was caused by his failing to give a feast. One sister was his enemy and made him either quarrel or go to war.

Ongtong lyoo adum nyet. At the end of his life there was a quarrel between Kado Palor *rum* and Deut *moong* for his soul, whether he should be allowed to live or die. Tamseu Pongseu *moong* took his soul away and gave it to Tongryoong *moong*, who is like a tiger, to eat. At the time of his death he was thinking about his youngest son.

Loongto dyeu adum nyet. Either he had been given a red cloth or a piece of meat, or he had been given a black hat by a Mun ku-man-bu (sorcerer); this made unhappy Palor *rum* and therefore the *moong* took his soul. He was preoccupied about his male relations on the father's side; therefore these people should perform for him the ceremony of Karbo Tookdeu Klon (a white *deu* on a *pong-ring*).

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787 *Hour of death.* He died at dawn, six o'clock. Had he lived till eighty he would have lived his full life; since he died six years earlier this was caused by devils. As the man was lying ill he wanted some food like butter or meat; but Sandé *moong* ate his soul, and is still lying there watching the food. His body must be cared for—washed and anointed—by people born in Tiger or in Thunder-bird year. Sandé *moong* has gone south from the house where the man died to another house where there are four humans and a blue horse tethered in the yard.[1] These people should summon three lamas to kill this

[1] Note by Tafoor; since there are no horses in the neighbourhood this can be ignored.

Sandé *moong*. The people of the house where he died must do the big ceremony of *Shidook ryak* or in four months Sandé *moong* will return again.

Day of death—Sunday. In ten days he will be reincarnated as a tiger and after that again as a human. Three months before his death Tébrong Pano took his soul and gave it to the devils.

Time of death—Sunrise. Three months before he died Deut *moong* ate his soul. The Deut Tsen *moong* was conveyed in a gift of gold or an animal's skin. The devil is still in the neighbourhood and the object should be thrown away. In eleven days he will be born as a tiger. As he lay dying he thought about his youngest child born in Fowl year, therefore this child should make an image of Sandé *moong* and of a snake and take it to a place where two roads cross and bury it. Sandé *moong* is in a leather bag hanging on the east side of the house. For the dead man the scripture Dorjé Chudo should be read; if that is read he will be reborn as Sangé Eusung *rum*; if it is not read he will be reborn as a pig in the east. The people in the house where he died must perform the ceremonies of Deut Sha-gu and Su-nen (killing an insect with a sacramental dagger) or they will be troubled by coughs.

Month of death—Gubu. The devil which ate his soul came from the west in the skin of a tiger or some other animal. As he lay dying he was preoccupied with a big ox and a big horse,[2] and a yellow cloth. A person who possesses

[2] Note by Tafoor: this probably means a mule.

these objects should perform the Dopu ceremony and make *nakleut* (a dough image stamped with butter) on a plate.

Mariwā Parrko.[3] He died in *Sin* (the syllable in Parrko). He was thinking

[3] The Parrko is another square on which the years are counted. It is a 9-year cycle independent of all the other cycles. Each year has its controlling syllable.

of a handsome box which had valuables in it of which he was fond. He was worried either about his wife or his youngest child and regretted leaving that person. Sandé *moong* has gone south to the male relatives or the biological sisters of the deceased. Death was caused by Jamfi *moong*—a devil of high mountains. There is a piece of meat or bone close by the body which should be buried with it. The devil was brought from the west in the skin of a tiger or some other animal. He regretted leaving his youngest son and daughter. One Sandé *moong* has gone to a maternal uncle, one to his eldest sister and one is still in the skin. At the house where he died they must do Subdok Tukdo Klon (make a *deu* and take it away to the east) and Gon-tsoo To-goo (dough stamped with *leut* and *deu*) and the scripture Tongbo Gen should be read; also

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Gebu *faat* (a Mun ceremony of throwing a *thomu*—lump of dough—to see which way the end points) should be performed. 787

Corpse. The corpse should be buried; it would be bad for it to be burnt.[4]

[4] Note by Tafoor: 'If the corpse were a lama's it would be burnt just the same.'

On the corpse must be put a paper inscribed with 'Parrko sin chagyou'. The corpse must not be shown to others. Since the corpse is an old man the door of death is open; if it had been a child the door would have been closed.

Mariwā Gumurr. Sandé *moong* is living in a red milch cow. The ceremony Onchook Tsoo Deurr must be done and also Yong Kook (this is three *pong-ring* with *deu*, etc.). He died at sunrise. To the south there are many devils. To the north there is a man with big earrings, or else a mole on his ear or nose and with curly hair and a red dress, whose name is Num; the devil has gone to him.

Sahor Taches—Stars. The devil who caused death followed a woman from the north-east. Therefore on the corpse should be a paper stamped with a horse from the *lokor* (the 12-year cycle).

Corpse carriers should be Horse or Snake year.

Removal of corpse. The corpse should be taken out of the south-east corner of the house.

. . . . . .

Notes: When Sandé *moong* is driven away ceremoniously on the third day the bag in which the devil resides should be taken with the offering and left for two days—after which it can be re-taken into use. All apparent contradictions are explained by being cumulative or by being contingent.

(*d*) Lama's Divination for Illness

May 1st. Chano came this morning to consult Tafoor about his wife, born in *beu nam* Snake year (1905), who was ill, and also his youngest daughter, who was born in *kik nam* Fowl year (1931) and was suffering from stomach ache. Taking their dates of birth and the present date as his data, Tafoor worked out the following diagnosis of the causes of their illnesses and the measures to be taken to cure them. The explanations were added afterwards 787 755

Wife. The drawing of the first diagram showed that the illness was caused by Sabdok Loo *moong*, by Dadé *moong* (other names Nanjet *moong* and Tom-poong Deut *moong*: it is an evil spirit sent by an enemy), and from Tamsi *moong*.[1]

[1] Tamsi *moong* is the *moong* who causes quarrelling and wars. To keep away quarrels and kill this *moong* a piece of paper is stamped with the printed effigy of the *moong* and surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks. Lamas then sit around this paper holding in their joined hands a *phoorbu*—a sort of sacred dagger, which has three heads on the handle and a piece of black cloth tied round the middle. They summon the devil in a sing-song voice with partly closed eyes: the devil comes in the form of an insect on to the paper when it is killed with the *phoorbu*. When the insect is killed it and the paper are put into a rat's skull,

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round which twelve *sutsong*—pieces of wood pointed at both ends and with a notch in the middle—one end being red and the other black—are tied, and the whole is buried where two roads meet, being well rammed down and a stone set on top of it.

Then from the first diagram, consulting the sacred book he learned the following additional facts. The patient will dream of a red ox.[2]

[2] This dream is automatic; if the patient says she has had no such dream it will be because she doesn't remember it; it is in the book.

People in her house mustn't buy blue cloth, or goats or oxen, and must not sit near a big tree. She must not eat the flesh of a red ox or of carrion. If she will survive to the month of Chupu, i.e. November—she will recover. She is troubled by the Hlamen Djémé *rum*, and he has already taken her soul inside his[3] walls. It is necessary to perform the ceremony of Deut Shagu Kyok.[4]

[3] This is a supernatural equivalent to the Mun *rum*, half-way between gods and demons, of an ambivalent nature, a god when pleased a devil when angry. Between here and heaven it has a gaol where it keeps the souls of men captive until bribed by offerings to let them go.

[4] For this ceremony a small image of the invalid made out of buckwheat powder is required. On the board are also *yé*, leaf cups with grain in, arrows and spindles; gold and silver is scraped over it. *Chimi* are lit, books read, the patient *pék* with *chonghu zipkē* and the offering removed far away.

The illness has been caused through considerable enmity and jealousy.[5]

[5] Karo *moong* is released automatically through evil thoughts, if you are annoyed with a person because his animals have strayed into your field or because you think he has done you harm, or even because you envy his possessions. The pestering by Karo *moong* is not the result of malice, and though through divination you try to find out who has released it no sort of revenge is taken. To cure its symptoms lamas will burn incense and a Mun will offer an ox and *pék* the patient. If, after having thought evilly of a person you repent and wish to withdraw Karo *moong* you light a number of *chimi* and perform the ceremony of Kongso Klon; chanting and beating drums either in the dark or at your house (must be done by a lama). Karo *moong* doesn't kill.

If the patient herself doesn't die somebody else is liable to. The smell of high meat is insufferable to her. She is very restless. Chimbu Klon and Dumbu Soong must be done at once.[6]

[6] Chimbu Klon—to give a feast without getting any contributions from the guests. The feast must include meat.

Gyapchi klon (this is the same as Dumbu Soong). Five images are made (*a*) Sher *moong*, white, (*b*) Lho *moong*, yellow, (*c*) Deut *moong*, red, (*d*) Chyong *moong*, indigo, (*e*) Mamoo Takloong, black, represented as a woman sitting with spread legs and open vulva. Round these are arranged in circles 100 *chard* for (*a*) 100 heaps of rice for (*b*), 100 *chimi* for (*c*), 100 *nakhat*—i.e. pieces of dough stamped with the figures of a man and a woman—for (*d*), and 100 *chongha zipkē* for (*e*). There must also be 100 *zumsol*—earth copies of *chang*. The lama officiating at this ceremony must be given five rupees.

If the invalid had not become ill she would have been very prosperous,

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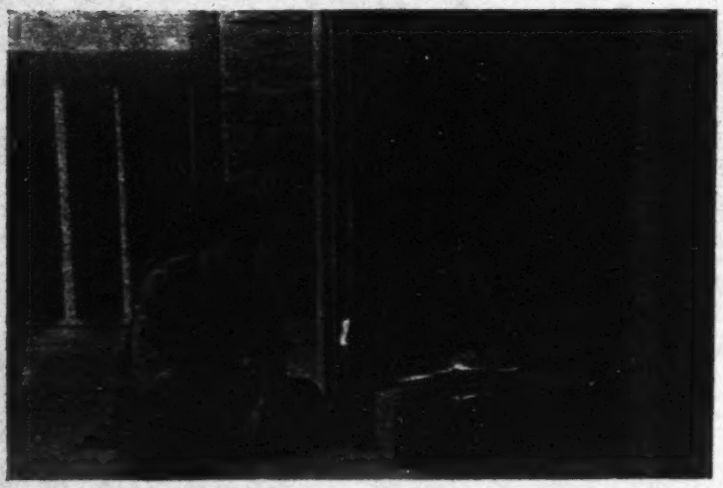

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CHANO CONSULTS TAFOOR ABOUT HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS

Above: Tafoor casts a horoscope in the monastery porch.

Below: The devils to be exorcised. Deut *moong*, Mamoo *moong*, Lho *moong*. They are about 25 cms. high, made out of coloured buckwheat powder on stands of banana stem.

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787 755 with lots of food and clothes and animals. As it is she is very bad; her soul has already one leg outside the body. It is the evil thoughts of others who have caused her malady. The Deut Shagu Kyok ceremony must be done at once.

Her husband Chano was born in Oon *nam* (Sheep year), and their years are antagonistic. They are liable to be troubled by Chemen *moong*, Loo Desen *moong*, Muzong Rum Loo, Sabdong *moong*.

The patient will dream of an old and decrepit house, and of a stream. She will vomit. She must not wear a black hat or put on black paint or buy anything black. For a year she should not take food from a relation except those living in the house.[7]

[7] The *moong* possessing her will be hungry and will try to get food. So that when it sees people giving the patient food it will attach itself to them in the hopes of getting more. This holds good for a year. It does not apply to people living in the same house.

A lama must read the following books: Tinchu Bekeu, Numjeu Cheré, Pungoor Luboong, Chétop Chachu. He must also make the following *deu*—Chemen Gédo, Lumoo Gédo—and set them up on a path. Chano must also get the ceremony Loo-fat performed by a Nandjému, and the ceremonies Goonchen and Séné Kyop by lamas. The wife must change her name.[8]

[8] This refers to the name she is usually known by, not her book-name. The new name can be given by anyone, and after that the old name must not be used. If the old name was meaningful, there is no tabu on the name in other contexts. The old name can be resumed after a year.

The rat skull (see 1) must be carried far by her nephew and buried deeply. A *Mezeu tsop* (image of the invalid) (4) must be made. There will be many quarrels in the house if the fine-seeming mischief-making advice and scandal of others is listened to and then Gébu Tabrong Pano[9] will be angry, and will

[9] Quarrels affect this deity as if they were a burning chilli (i.e. irritating smoke).

send all sorts of aches and pains, starting with toothache, as a punishment, and they will continue for some time. The Tyouma Rumso[10] ceremony

[10] This consists of dancing round a cloth and knife-scabbard with a knife in the hand, and also burning *lapsong*—that is incense with crops, *chi* and butter, and scraping gold, silver, brass, copper, iron, turquoise, coral, and conch-shell over the incense. It is the same as Da-floh.

must be performed and also Kongso Klon (chasing devils).

Baby. The baby will be seriously ill. A small image must be made of it and the invalid's hat and coat put with it and it must be taken far away. When taken out of the house the head must not face towards the sunset as trouble will come from there. It should be taken out facing Chyom (south). It is necessary for the ceremonies to be done very carefully as the mother's soul has already got one foot outside the body.

For the baby's health the father should not go anywhere where there has been quarrelling or where corpses have been burned, or where there are people of low degree like blacksmiths and musicians. The baby is troubled by

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[787] Maknyam *moong*[11] and will get pains as though the body were pierced, and pains

[11] This is the devil which causes death. It acts rather like a vampire; those
[755] people whom it kills become in turn Maknyam *moong*. Consequently it is in
a way the evil ghost of one's ancestors—since they died by Maknyam *moong*
[761] and became it in their turn. At one time it used to be visible; but the *sanyoul koong* (tree) which grew in the mountains was cut down and barred its way; now the devil's body can no longer come out, merely its soul.

Maknyam *moong* runs in every family, but some families also suffer from Arot maknyam *moong*—the devil which causes violent deaths. Such a family is that of Kaji's (late) first wife. One of her brothers recently fell from a tree; a pregnant woman in the family was crushed by a falling tree.

in the heart and left shoulder, and shortness of breath. The parents should not buy red or white cloth, or bows and arrows, or any sort of animal from other people, or eat the flesh of carrion or drink rock or rain water. Should it survive till the fifth day of Choobu the crisis will be then. Care should be taken not to let it play with knives and other dangerous instruments. The following sacred books should be read: Numchya Chu, Tukzung Chosung, Nangsa Nanget, Dorjé Chu, etc. The Dafloh dance should be performed, incense burned, and holy *tyü* water sprinkled. The Tsatsoh Kyop (stamped *choten*) ceremony should be performed, and also Tsinmu Faat. The child should wear a yellow cloth. Some iron, the head of a chicken and the head of a monkey (? skulls) should be made into a bundle and put on the *kingkoor* (house altar).

For some time there will be many quarrels and general bad temper. (*Aside*: perhaps the baby has been shaken up inside.) All its life long the child will be in danger of death, and that is equally true of its mother. (I think this means that both are threatened by hostile supernaturals, and constant care is needed to ward them off.) Hlamen Djémé (this is the ambivalent supernatural, the god of the Mun, god or demon according as to whether it is pleased or angry) will plague the patient much. The Deut *moong* which is in the house plagues it as severely as if it were the child's mother. The Deut Shagu Kyop (4) ceremony must be performed at once.

The gods and devils are quarrelling over the child's body; should the devils win the child will die. Therefore the ceremonies must be done very properly. The child must avoid water out of rocks or from puddles. Had it not been ill everything it set hand to—trade, crops, animals—would prosper; it would have a life covered with flowers. But (figuratively speaking) a prayer-flag is tottering and must be set upright. Some covetousness (perhaps from a childless woman) has caused the trouble. The child is always in a hurry, inattentive to its parents. Its soul has been taken by Gongbu[12] and Mamoo Deut Tsen[13]

[12] This devil causes swelled stomach. To cure get an ox's horn and fill with rice seed; the lama will hold this and pray silently, and then *pék* the patient and give him some seeds. Butter, meat and *taki* must be mixed and set fire to, and taken outside.

[13] This is a trinity of supernaturals, consisting of the female Mamoo who is indigo, Deut *moong* who is white and Tsen *moong* who is red.

will give trouble. Maknyam *moong* (11) is in the house, and also a devil Badé which was sent in the time of the father or grandfather. Now the gods are angry and Daphlo should be performed. The child is constantly dreaming of human

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corpses; it either has, or will, excreted and brought up blood. It has no appetite. First the gods were angry, now the *moong* are. The ceremony Yongkeuk Gedo Klon [14] must be performed and Sunen (same as Tamsi, 1) and the taking 787 755

[14] This is a ceremony for the material prosperity of the worshipper. A milking pot surrounded with a rope is set up, and on the left side is put a cup of strained *chi*, with four *sakyou*, dabs of butter. Lamas read their books and there is a constantly recurring phrase 'Yago Chakook Sho'; whenever that recurs the bystanders shout 'Ya'.

away of the image of the child *ing kup leut ryuk* (4). Also a red *yeu* Tsendeu Gedo must be made. When the image is taken away the head must not face towards the hills; trouble comes from there. The child's chief trouble will be cough.

N.B. When the Dafloh is danced in laymen's houses a Mun will kill an ox at the same time.

. . . . . .

Although Chano is a lama he can perform none of these ceremonies for himself, and must pay for consultations, etc., as much as a layman would. Tafoor says he has to give his heart to the work—because all the supernaturals are hidden in a huge house—but he finds everything from the books. If he relied on inspiration he might make mistakes. It is very similar to systematic astrology or card-reading, the varying permutations of years and signs being practically inexhaustible.

. . . . . .

(e) Performance of Indicated Ceremonies

On May 9th the ceremonies indicated by Tafoor's exorcism were performed. The various lamaist ceremonials were telescoped into one—*Gyapchi klon*— by the addition of such other items as were indicated for the expulsion of the other devils, without introducing contradictory elements. Thus, using the notes in the previous horoscope (1) was not performed as Tamsi *moong* was not the chief operative devil; (4) was super-imposed on (6) *gyapchi klon*; (10) the Tyou-ma rum-so or Dafloh dance was performed at the end of the ceremony; and Yong keuk gédo klon, a minor ceremony, was postponed. The most important thing was that Hlamen Djémé *rum* had been recognised by Gongyop as being in fact the Mun spirit; and therefore Mrs. Chano was to be dedicated to the Mun god and to receive instruction from Gongyop as her teacher. Consequently there were as usual a simultaneous Mun and lamaist ceremony; the Mun ceremony conducted by Gongyop is called ABOONG AK (opening the mouth) or RUM KEUK (acknowledging the god); the lamaist ceremony conducted by Tafoor can be conveniently referred to as GYAPCHI KLON. 755

Preparatory to *gyapchi klon* Chano had prepared a large quantity of ground millet powder and ground buckwheat powder, and the trunk of a banana tree was cut up into segments to serve as stands for the images to be made. Sifted earth was also collected, as well as a hundred leaves; in the morning rice was cooked,

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755 Tafoor arrived early in the morning to start the making of sacrificial objects; he brought with him as *kané* and assistant his wife's brother the son of Lharibu Chujen of Panung; Chano also helped in the making of the objects. The first objects to be made were the images of the devils, each about ten inches high (see photograph) and placed on a three-inch stand of banana stalk. These images were made out of buckwheat flour mixed with water; they were moulded by hand, and the details marked with a blunt piece of wood; they were left to dry slightly before the colouring matter was added. The four male devils were identical; they are portrayed standing; Chyong *moong* was coloured green, Deut *moong* red, Lho *moong* yellow and Sher *moong* white. Mamoo *moong* the female supernatural was portrayed sitting down with her legs apart; the breasts and pubic hair were greatly exaggerated, and also the vulva which was coloured red, the rest of the image being black. After this the image of the house-owner was set up in the centre of an enamelled plate (this is a quite conventional image of buckwheat powder about eight inches high); round the foot of this were grouped discs impressed with the conventional butter image of husband and wife (stamped from the wooden printing block from the monastery) about two inches high and around that again twelve smaller discs stamped with the effigies of the twelve years. These elaborate images took about five hours to prepare, between eight in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon.

About one o'clock the ox was dedicated by Gongyop (see below); after the dedication it was killed by Chinya and then cut up by Chala Mandal, who was dressed in very old clothes and was covered with blood at the end. The head, one fore-leg and one hind-leg and the intestines were reserved for the ceremony of ABOONG AK; the rest of the meat was divided up amongst those present. During the course of the afternoon the following people arrived, most of them accompanied by their wives and families: Chinya (Chano's 'brother'), Chudo (Tafoor's brother), Thyak Thimbu (Gongyop's brother), Tempa, Aga (Chano's 'brother'), Chala Mandal, Adér (Chano's 'grandfather') and Rigya. As they arrived they were presented with a *panyoot* of *chi* and sat down in the kitchen to gossip and eat; nobody paid any attention to the ceremonies. The wife, in whose intention the ceremonies were being performed, wandered around rather listlessly. The cooking was being supervised by Mrs. Chinya, and Chano welcomed the guests; but Tempa, who was no relation, tried to act as if he was the host, particularly towards ourselves.

Meanwhile in the *dé-ong* Tafoor and his assistant were continuing the fabrication of the sacrificial objects; four *gyachen diri* were made; these consist of a small rectangular obelisk of dough mounted on a slice of banana stalk with four hollows scooped out of the four sides; these are for the worship of Sercho Gébu *pano*, the king of the east. Flags of coloured paper were prepared for these mounted on splinters of bamboo; these flags—*dado*—are rectangular, with a triangle cut out of the far narrow side.

Then the smaller objects were prepared; one hundred of each of the four smaller objects had to be made; they were made roughly and quickly, but a great deal of difficulty arose in deciding if enough objects had been made. They were arranged in groups of twenty to make counting easier but even so there was great uncertainty, and at one moment Tafoor, who had remained perfectly calm and peaceful the whole time exclaimed "I am as angry as a

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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

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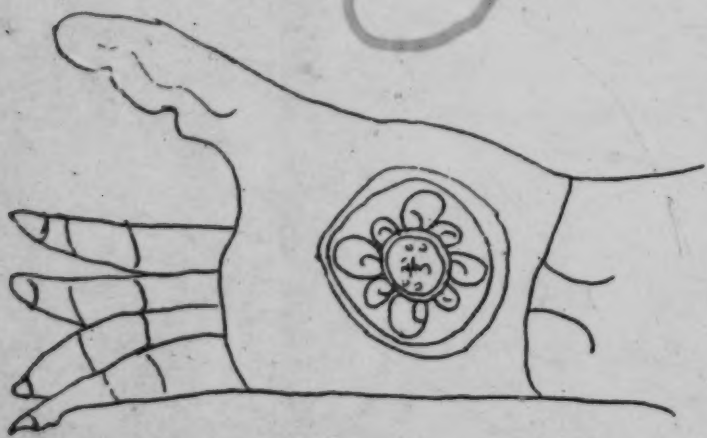
155 standing penis.' Eventually all the small objects were made; they consisted of (*a*) 100 *choten* of earth—small barrows about three inches by one made by stamping damp earth in a mould; (*b*) 100 *chaṭé*—buckwheat flour rolled into a double cone joined at the base with a smear of white butter on each tip; (*c*) 100 *nahleut*—dough discs stamped with the 'husband and wife' die in butter; (*d*) 100 *chongbu tipkū*—twisted strips of dough which were fastened into bundles of five each. Dusk was falling by the time all the objects had been completed; they had taken two men the better part of twelve hours to make. Small boys had been sent to Gongyop's house to fetch 100 *chimi* (altar lights) which he was lending for the occasion, and to the Mandal's house to fetch a small brass image of the god Chumdendé (a Buddha-like figure) and its cloth panoply.

When everything had been prepared the floor of the *dé-ong* was swept and



covered with a clean mat. Then on this in chalk Tafoor drew very swiftly a rather odd hand (see accompanying illustration) which represents the hand of Buddha; the design in the centre represents a mountain surrounded by sea sorrounded by four big and four small worlds again surrounded by sea. On top of this design was put a basket filled with grain with a rupee at the bottom; on this basket was put the plate with the representation of the house-owner. Then around this in a square were arranged (1) the *choten*, (2) the *chaṭé* dedicated to Sher *moong*, (3) the lighted *chimi* dedicated to Deut *moong*, (4) the *nahleut* for Chyong *moong*, (5) the bundles of *chongbu tipkū* dedicated to Mamoo *moong*, (6) the *gyachen diṭi* were placed in each corner, with a lighted *chimi* before each; into the top of these, and also into the image of the house-owner were stuck *dado* in the following colours starting from the left and facing the house altar:

blue white
black
red yellow

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755 (7) In a line with these were placed one hundred heaps of cooked rice on banana leaves dedicated to Lho *moong*. These offerings covered the palm of the hand and were about six feet square.

On the drawn fingers were placed two tables, the higher one to the back; on the lower table was (starting from the left) a *chaṭé* (a big heap of dough), three dishes of water, two dishes of uncooked rice and a big *chimi* (these offerings are for the gods to wash, etc.). On the higher back table were placed (also starting from the left and facing the house altar) Sher *moong*, Lho *moong*, Deut *moong*, Chyong *moong*, Mamoo *moong*. Into the back of each image was stuck a *yé*—a diamond of thread on bamboo supports—of the same colour as the image; into the image of the house-owner was stuck a *yé* (the *yé* represents the supernatural's palace) of all five colours; the six images also had stuck on each side of the *yé* a *tam-sing*, a pointed wooden label inscribed with the supernatural's name in Tibetan, and a *pong*, a thin piece of bamboo with small tufts of white wool down its length which represent the clouds around the supernatural's palace. Finally a large tripod made from three bamboos was lashed so as to centralise over the image of the house-owner; the top above the lashing was stuffed with a cloth and on that was placed the metal image of Chumdendé. Directly above it, suspended from the bamboo ceiling was the canopy of red, white and blue cloth, looking rather like a bird-cage.

By the time the offering was completely erected it was quite dark, but the *dé-ong* was bright with the hundred and more altar lights, and Tafoor had a small oil lamp to read by. After he had arranged everything he put on his lama's coat—he had taken it off and worked in his shirt and drawers—and sat down cross-legged against the altar. In front of him was the gong, and by him Chimpet to hold the light and beat the gong when necessary. By his side was the *kané* with the 'clarionet'. The ceremony consisted of invoking each demon in turn by the reading of the appropriate scripture and the playing of music, and mollifying it by worshipping it as a god and showing the offerings and then dismissing it. For the five devils this took about two hours. Tafoor chanted in the usual lamaist tones. Tempa and Kurma (who arrived rather late) and Chano looked in from time to time, but everybody else stopped in the kitchen, lit by a big smoking wood fire, eating and drinking and gossiping. When the reading from the scriptures was finished, Chano, his wife and children were called in and *pék* by Tafoor with one of the bundles of *chongbu-tipkū*. Then the six images were turned round so as to face the house-door; a narrow path of two lines of flour was traced from them to the door which was then opened; a couple of minutes' silence were allowed for the devils to depart satisfied; and then the images were carried away by the unrelated young men present, while others held torches to illuminate them; the images were thrown away at a fixed spot in the forest.

Tafoor and his helpers went into the kitchen for food—they had been constantly provided with *chi*. Subsequently the offering was demolished, the earth thrown away, and the rice and objects made out of dough eaten by the guests and especially the children; neither the officiating lamas nor the people in whose intention the offering was made may ever eat the sacrificial objects, but other people may without supernatural danger. The basket filled with grain with a rupee inside was given to the *kané*; Tafoor received Rs. 5 or the equivalent in grain.

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MUN CEREMONIAL—ABOONG AK

In the early afternoon Gongyop dedicated a live ox to the Mun god and also arranged on an open-air altar—*chom*—made of two bamboos laid on a bush (see illustration) the following offering. On a brass plate were placed three *chimi*, three heaps of uncooked rice with a stick smeared with butter set into the centre of each, a scarf and a rupee, a scrap of new cloth (it had been begged from a tailor) and Mrs. Chano's necklaces and jewels. The permanent part of this offering was only displayed to gratify the supernaturals, and would be taken back into use the next day. These were all dedicated to the Mun god by Gongyop, who in a long prayer asked the god to accept the offerings and spare the life of the sufferer, who would in recompense devote her life to his service. The ox was then killed and cut up, during which time Gongyop *munthen* called on the gods in meditation. A small portion of the intestines were hashed and cooked with rice, and these Gongyop, assisted by his wife but otherwise ignored, gave to the minor devils, throwing out a handful of food after an invocation to each specific devil (see illustration).

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Later that night the solemn and private ceremony of *aboong ak* was performed. We were not able to witness it, but were given the following account:

A large winnowing tray—*Talyung*—is put on the floor with the curved end away from the teacher and the neophyte; at the straight end is placed a low table and on it is placed at the left a scarf with a rupee on it, in the centre a wooden cup filled with *chi* with butter on the rim (*sakyou faat*) and on the right a stone incense burner filled with incense leaves. On the winnowing tray the dedicated portions of the sacrificed animal[1] are laid out in the following order:

[1] An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophyte will be unable to expel Lom-doon *moong* (the devil of jaundice); if a goat he will be unable to expel Mat *moong* (this devil produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the result of ancestral quarrels).

opposite the *sakyou faat* cup is the head, facing the table; behind it are the upper intestines, the wind-pipe, oesophagus, etc., called here *oo-koong sha-fot*; to the left is a hind-leg and to the right a fore-leg; between the fore-leg and the intestines is a thigh-bone with some meat left on it called *shang-oh*. When all is arranged the Mun sits behind the table on the left behind the scarf with his pupil to the right of him (or her). First of all the Mun puts the rupee and scarf in the pupil's hands and then recites a prayer which the pupil repeats after him phrase by phrase. The Mun then gets up and stands at the foot of the offering and waves the incense burner over the pupil and the offerings; he then makes a solemn address to the pupil, explaining that he has paid the price to the devils to ransom his body, but on condition of dedicating his life to the Mun god and offering his body as a house for it. The Mun then returns to the same side as his pupil and gives him the buttered cup to drink from three times from three sides—first the side facing the sacrifice, then the opposite side and finally the right side. This drinking of the buttered *chi* is (as in all Mun ceremonials) the ritual consecration of the act undertaken; after this the pupil is bound to study with the teacher for three years.

Of the sacrificial ox one fore-leg and the heart, lungs, liver and intestines

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755 are given to the teacher as fee; the rest of the animal, except the portions on the winnowing tray, are divided up among the sacrificer and his guests. Of the portions on the tray the head, hind-leg, thigh-bone and upper intestines also go to the teacher; the dedicated fore-leg—*derkau*—is cut up raw into small pieces and one piece is given to every household in the village.

Note. In the above description of a lamaist and Mun ceremony I have given the details of the ritual objects which I have not given in the relevant chapters. Although the ingredients of every ceremony are very similar they differ in detail in every case. The details of lamaist offerings and their fabrication are minutely controlled by scriptural instructions. The Mun offerings are much less complicated. The greater number are fixed traditionally and are known to nearly every adult, but they may be varied at the inspiration of the officiating Mun for any particular ceremony.

It will be noticed that every lamaist horoscope entails the performance of certain lamaist ceremonies, and consequently brings money and goods to the body of lamas.

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APPENDIX IV

THE SACRED STORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

(This is one of the two Lepcha stories which can only be recited by those people who have obtained the ceremonial qualification or *loong*. The other story is the long Mun genesis (see Chapter Eight, p. 223) of which the greater part consists of a long catalogue of names.

The sacred story of the origin of marriage has to be repeated in its entirety by the officiant at each marriage. It takes between two and three hours to rehearse, owing to the innumerable internal repetitions and culminations which I have indicated in brackets. Nearly every paragraph is repeated twice, and some many times more.)

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When Itpomu had completed creation there were no husbands and wives. The last person she bore was a son called Tarbong-bo whom she nursed. When the child grew big enough to work he told his mother that he would like to travel and see the world. His mother said "No, you are too young" but he insisted, and so she cooked some rice for him and put it into his knapsack. So the next morning he travelled by the road called Parhi Pageun and came to the top of Paki Chu; from there he went down to Palyang Chu, which is a mountain above Sakhyong and can be seen on a clear day. From there he saw the *palit samper koong* tree covered with fruits, and *pedong*, *taryong athyak kanyoong* and many other birds eating the fruit. When he saw that he sat down and ate his rice; then he returned home in the evening and climbed on to his mother's lap and sucked her milk. His mother then asked "What did you see?" He told her what he had seen (*verbal repetition*). Then his mother said "If you are my son you must go and get *yongming yongsong* (which is a kind of bamboo) and the thread *komok ki* (to make traps)." That night he slept at home and the next day he went and got what his mother had said, cutting down the bamboos and returned home. The day after that he went back to Palyang Chu and made snares with the threads and set them on the trees and returned and climbed on his mother's lap and told her what he had done. His mother told him that he must go back early in the morning. He did so and found all the different sorts of birds caught in the snares, so many that they made a full load. When he had collected the birds he reset the snares and then went home and said to his mother "Mother, if these birds are good to eat, eat them and take them as my repayment for your milk: if they are no good, throw them away." Itpomu replied "They are good to eat: and I accept them as a recompense for my milk."

The next morning Tarbong returned to the tree, but instead of birds in the traps he found in every trap a penis, exactly like real life, made out of wood.

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539 Tarbong was angry at this, threw the penises away, and reset the traps. Then
581 he went home and climbed on to his mother's lap and said "Mother, today
773 I have nothing to bring you; there were no birds in the traps, just penises of wood." At this his mother said "If you are my son, you will go and hide yourself so carefully that even the birds cannot see you, and then in your hiding place you can stay and see who does this thing." The next morning he returned and found the snares again full of penises; he threw them away, and reset the snares and then hid himself so well that even the birds could not see him. After a time a beautiful girl dressed in *kaji lasong* (nettle cloth) arrived and started to make wooden penises. She was very beautiful; her name was Na Rip Nom, and her mother was Ta Im Ta Mit. Tarbong was angry when he saw her doing this and he climbed up the tree to try to stop her, and they struggled and rolled hither and thither; and then he got excited and tried to rape her, but he could not do so and so they separated and he went home and climbed on his mother's lap and said to her "Mother, I have come home without any birds." "What did you see, my son?" "I found Naripnom making penises of wood, and I tried to copulate with her, but I could not. So I return empty-handed. She is very beautiful." Then Itpomu said "If you want to possess that girl you had better go to your elder brother Komsi*thing* who lives at Rungzing Patham."

So Tarbong went to Komsi*thing*, and when he saw his younger brother he asked him why he had come. So Tarbong told him (*recapitulation*): "This girl was putting penises in my traps, and I wanted to possess her but could not, and my mother advised me to come to you." Then Komsi-*thing* said "How can you expect to possess the girl unless you give the marriage price *nyomsa afaar* and make a sacrifice with *chi* and butter *sakyou tsok rum-faat?* Do you love this girl?" "Very much." "Then I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Nepal and get from him the pig of the plains Malu Mayeng and buy a copper vessel." So Tarbong went to Nepal and brought back a pig and a copper vessel. When he returned Komsi*thing* said "I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Bhutan to get the cloth *kamo*." So he went to Bhutan and returned with the cloth, and then he had the pig and the copper pot and the cloth. (*The story cumulates—The House that Jack Built.*) From his Tibetan *ingzong* he got a rug Numbo. From Mayel near Konchen he got millet. From Kanyong (Sikkim) he got an ox.

Now at this time there was no fire in the world; it was only in the land between earth and heaven called Mashyok Matel where the demons dwelt, in the houses of the Deut *moong* who were smiths and were called Tangshyo Tangong Karvo. Now when Komsi*thing* told Tarbong to go there to fetch fire to cook the millet he was frightened and said he would not go among the devils for then they would eat him. So Komsi*thing* called on all human beings and animals and birds and insects to volunteer to go and fetch the fire, promising rewards of gold and jewels and rich cloths. When this offer was made the bird Kahryok Fo smiled and said "I will go for a reward." And the bird flew there and found the smith's house empty as all the people were out working elsewhere, so it took a brand in its beak from the fireplace and flew back. On its way back it came to the Kashou tree (chestnut); there it felt hungry, and laid the brand on a branch while it looked for fruit. But the wind blew and the flames sprang up and a great fire raged over the world, and the bird was caught

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in it; that is the reason why till this day it has short feathers and a black face. It was ashamed and did not return to Komsi*thing*. 539

Komsi*thing* waited for the bird but it did not come and he saw the fire, so he asked for another volunteer; and this time an insect (? *wasp or firefly—like a grasshopper, but flies*) *taknyom nomyor nyom* volunteered to go for a reward. When it got to the smith's house all the Deut *moong* were away, so it lay on its back by the fireplace and looked at the house upside down; and the whole house turned upside down. When the Deut *moong* returned from the west it found its house upside down and searched and found the insect who had done it lying on its back; he tried to catch it, but it wriggled and flew away. The Deut *moong* said "Why have you upset my house in this way? I shall kill you for it." The insect said "If you do kill me, your house will never get straight again." "Please don't do that. What have you come for?" "Komsi*thing* has sent me to fetch fire." "I will give you some, if you promise to straighten my house; but you cannot carry fire in your mouth." "Yes, I can." They argued, and finally the insect took a brand in its mouth, and the Deut *moong* put a flint and tinder up its backside. On his return the insect rested by the Mong Ing Pong tree, and put down the brand at the foot of the tree; but the wind came and blew it to a blaze and the insect got therefrom a black face. But it flew back to Komsi*thing* and gave him the flint and tinder from his backside, since he had lost the brand; and he told him all that the Deut *moong* had told him, and showed him how to make a fire with dry grass. So they made a fire and cooked the millet in the copper vessel, but, when the millet was cooked they found they had no yeast. 581 773

The only person who possessed yeast was an old woman who lived in the plains called Numli-*nyou*; so Komsi*thing* asked who would volunteer to go and fetch it, promising great rewards. The insect *takder thing* said it would go and it went to live with the old woman for some days and helped her. One day she started to prepare *chi*, and cooked the millet; but when it came to the moment of putting in the yeast she covered *takder* with a close woven basket *tangar*. But when *takder* was inside he cried "Grandmother, in this basket I can see everything which is going on in the world; if you want to hide something from me you should cover me with a *tangjang* (this is a loose woven basket)." The old woman believed what he said and covered him with a *tangjang* and so he could see all that she was doing, though he pretended he could not. He saw her take a pot from the back of her neck, and pour something from it into her hands. Then she rubbed her hands together and scattered the dust over the cooked millet; she replaced the pot; and put the millet in the basket. Then *takder* cried "Grandmother, please take me out of this basket; I am suffocating." So Numli-*nyou* removed the basket.

After two days the lovely smell of ferment rose from the millet, and then the old woman put it in an earthen pot and covered the pot well up, and stood it over the fire. *Takder* tried to get the pot with yeast in it, but he could not; at last he hit on a plan. He told Numli-*nyou* he could see a louse in her hair and asked her to let him remove it: she agreed so he jumped on her shoulders and started delousing her. While this operation was going on Numli-*nyou* became sleepy; and then *takder* removed the pot very very slowly and very very quietly and ran away. When he was half-way away she woke up and missed *takder*. Then she discovered the theft and saw him running away and shouted after him

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"I thought you were my grandson, but I see you are nothing but a thief; you have stolen my yeast and will give it to everybody all over the world. So I set my curse on it; may it make everybody who drinks it drunk and quarrelsome." And so it has been; when people get drunk they quarrel.

When *takder* returned to Komsi*thing* with the yeast, Komsi*thing* asked him if he knew how to make *chi*: *takder* said he did (*complete recapitulation*) and they followed his instructions; but since they had no earthenware pots to put the fermented *chi* in they put it in baskets, well covered with leaves. Then Komsi*thing* asked *Taknyom* what reward he desired for bringing the fire: *Taknyom* replied "Gold and jewels and clothes are no use to an animal; what I want is to be given the plants *mangder* and *sanghlo* which grow in the valley." (*He was given these.*) Similarly *Takder* (*complete recapitulation*) was granted the leavings at the bottom of the spoons and plates and patyoot.

When the *chi* was ready all were afraid to be the first to drink. Eventually the snake Putsong *beu* was summoned and drank it; when it had drunk it dashed away like lightning. Seeing this all the gods and men were frightened to drink. After that the snake Pamol *beu* was summoned; but when it had drunk it ran about biting people and animals so that they all died. (When Sangé *rum* saw that the snake would kill everybody if it was allowed to behave so he set a lock on its mouth; and nowadays it bites very few people.) Next the snake Poblyok *beu* was summoned: when it had drunk it fell senseless. Komsi*thing* gave that snake the ferns to live in; it is harmless. After this they thought that the *chi* was harmless; but then they found they had no butter for *Sakyou faat*. So Komsi*thing* went to Itpomu and asked for butter so that they could *Sakyou faat* for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripmu. He said to his mother "We have the *chi*, but no butter." Itpomu said "Get a bamboo *yongtong*," and when he had got it she filled it with the butter which she had from her cows. Then on her instructions nine containers (*takner*) of *chi* were prepared, and their edges were smeared with butter.

Now all the gods and men gathered for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripnom. Everything was prepared in due order; all the gifts were placed on one side, and then Komsi*thing rum faat* with *chi* and *sakyou*. This is the reason why today when a marriage is celebrated all the gods are worshipped, and these gifts are given. Only when Tarbong and Naripmu were husband and wife was he able to possess her. This is the reason why to-day Lepchas still give the same gifts; this is BRI-IT, the origin of marriage.

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APPENDIX V

LEPCHA STORIES

(As has been stated in Chapter Ten, the Lepchas' favourite amusement is to tell and listen to stories, of which they have a very large repertoire. A collection of these stories would doubtless fill many volumes; I was told a very considerable number. I am giving here four typical stories of the type told by Lepchas for entertainment. I have abbreviated them all by cutting out the internal repetitions.) 539

(a) THE STORY OF LYANG MOK MOONG

A frightening story about devils.

Once there were two boys who were great friends; one lived at Sabeun and the other at Karhyong (places very near Lingthem). They used to set traps for birds on a *gehr* tree on the far side of Sungzoom mountain. The boy from Karhyong used to come to Sabeun and they would climb the mountain together; when they had cleared the traps they would take their catch down with them and divide it at Sabeun.

Now one day the boy from Sabeun suggested to his friend that, instead of his making the journey to Sabeun on the day after the morrow, they should both go separately and directly to the tree and meet there; the boy from Karhyong agreed. But when the boy from Sabeun arrived at the tree he saw no trace of his friend and no footprints; this was because a devil had killed him and eaten him just by the place where the elder Mrs. Lumba's field-house now stands. Since his friend was not there the boy from Sabeun started emptying the traps; in the middle of this he thought he saw his friend coming towards him; but in truth it was the devil in disguise. The disguised devil said: "I tried to catch you up, but I could not, and you have reached here first." Then, as he saw the boy from Sabeun taking the birds out of the trap the devil asked him "How on earth did you climb the tree?" and then made an attempt itself to climb up by standing on its hands and putting its feet high up on the trunk. Of course it could not climb in this way.

Then the devil took out of the front of its dress the head of the boy from Karhyong all dripping with blood, and it said to the boy from Sabeun: "Do you like eating *ka-sok* root?" and with that started gnawing at the head. Now when he did this the boy from Sabeun realised he was faced with a devil and was very frightened; he thought to himself if I come down from the tree the devil will eat me too. So he made a plan and gathered together all the bird-traps on the tree and made three bundles of them, one big, one medium

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539 and one tiny. First of all he threw the big bundle a little way away; the devil thought it was a man and ran to attack it. Then he threw the medium bundle farther away, and the devil ran after that; then he threw the tiny one a very long way away and the devil ran after *that* one; and when the devil was as far away as possible the boy climbed down the tree and ran quickly home to his house (it was the house of one of Serving's forefathers) and there he told what had happened to him (*complete repeat*) and then died.

It is on account of this that old people used to say that friends should not make appointments in distant places, for instead of one of the friends a devil will come. But nowadays it is not so dangerous, for more people live in the neighbourhood, and the lamas with their books have controlled the devils.

. . . . . .

Tafoor, who told this story, added: "Whether this story is true or not the following story is certainly true. The 'big mother' of Ashyok *youmi* and Gongyop's father Sankip were lovers and used to meet together in the field-house, where at some seasons of the year the woman used to live. Now one day she made an appointment with her lover for the evening and in expectation of his coming cooked a meal of manioc and pumpkin. But Sankip did not arrive, and when it got dark she thought she saw her husband sitting on the bamboo ends which projected from the side of the field-house like a verandah. She thought her husband had come instead of her lover, so she decided to make the best of it and built up a big fire and called to her husband to come in. But when the flames of the fire lept up and cast a clear light the figure turned its head aside so that its face could not be seen; the woman realised at once that it was a devil. So she fetched a bow and arrows and a knife and placed them beside her, and all night she kept a big fire burning and sat watching. When the first cock crowed at Sanklong the figure disappeared. As soon as it was light enough the woman went to look for footprints, and found the prints of feet *without any toes*. After this horrible experience she became a Mun."

(ɔ) THE STORY OF MELOAN MOONG

A comic story about devils.

(This story was told by Chala Mandal with great vivacity. He imitated the curious falsetto broken speech which indicates devil talk and at the climax imitated all Mother devil's actions in pantomime.)

A very long time ago when there were no lamaist books and only very few people living here in Lingthem there were two families who had their houses just below my (i.e. the Mandal's) house, where there are rice-terraces today. Nearby is a white cliff with a hole in it and inside that hole lived a family of devils called Meloan; the family consisted of a mother and father and two children.

Now one day the members of the households all went out to work in the

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fields, but they left behind a boy called Pun-sho-hang to look after his baby brother. While they were all alone mother Meloan *moong* came and captured Pun-sho-hang and took him home to kill him and eat him; she locked him up with her children in the hole in the cliff and then she went away to work. The boy was very frightened and started to cry and said: "How miserable I am! the devils are going to kill and to eat me!" When he cried the tears ran down his face; but the devil children had never seen tears and they were very curious and they came and licked up his tears. Pun-sho-hang was very angry at this and beat the devil children with his knife, chasing them into every corner of the cave.

In the morning—for devils work by night—mother and father Meloan devil came back bringing with them charcoal and *pasom* fruit (an inedible nut) as rice, with earthworms for a relish. All the devils ate this fare, but Punshohang threw his away. At this the mother devil said in her whining voice "Pun-sho-hang-ne mi-fyol-ne ma-cha-ne-pa . . . ? etc." (*This is devil language* "Pun-sho-hangy-wangy doesn't eaty-peaty charcoal-woaly . . . etc.") The next evening the same thing occurred. (*Complete repeat with lots of devil dialogue.*)

Then after dinner the grown-up devils went out again and locked up Punshohang with the devil children and he cried again and they licked his tears (*complete repeat*) and Punshohang hit the devil children with his knife and chased them all over the place, so that they were very sore. Then he felt sleepy. so he laid down to rest, using the scabbard of his knife, which he held in his hand, as a pillow. When he was drowsy the devil children came up to him and shook him and said in shrill devil voices: "Pun-sho-hang-ne ta ha!" and they pointed out to him the place where the door-key was; for they thought he would beat them a lot, and so that they would be happier if he went away. When Punshohang opened his eyes he saw the key; he was very glad and opened the door and started to run away home.

But before he had got home mother Meloan returned and saw the door open and started to pursue him by following his footprints. Punshohang saw her coming after him; but he found a pit which had been dug to look for manioc root, so he hid in that, and pulled leaves and grass over him, so that the pit would not show. When the mother devil saw that the footprints had stopped she hunted all round but could find no trace; so she sat down on the edge of the pit to consult her oracle. She undid her sash and bared her parts; the hair hung right over her vulva. She looked fixedly at it and then made the invocation "Reshing tam-et tam tam" (*this is magic*) at which the long pubic hair erected at once and then pointed straight down to show that the boy was underground. Punshohang was in the pit looking up at her. But this seemed nonsensical to the mother devil so she put a number of other questions to her bush (*all given in full*) but each time it pointed straight down. She kept on questioning it, getting angrier and angrier, till in the end she cried "My bush is telling me lies!" And with that she pulled it out with the skin and returned home.

Then Punshohang crept out of the pit and returned to his home; he had been lost for two days and two nights and everybody had been searching for him. When he returned home he stank horribly; so they washed him all over with strained *chi*. Then his parents asked him where he had been? He

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539 told them the whole story (*almost complete repeat*) and when he had finished talking he fell down dead.

(*Note*: this story takes about an hour to tell: the devil's home-life and conversation, and especially the mother devil with her oracle are almost hysterically funny, and the jokes are repeated and repeated with only slight variations. The story is only slightly sinister, because, since the advent of the lamas and their books, Meloan devils no longer live near Lingthem. It is said however that a man at Tangvoong (a village about ten miles away) was killed and eaten by these devils; all that was found of him was his belt and his bones.)

(c) A LEGEND OF THE KINGS OF TIBET AND SIKKIM

Commencement only.

Once upon a time there was a king called Agyap Patso Numgé; he was a human being, but his sister Queen Ong-Bala was a devil. She lived in a separate palace of her own, and all the common people served the pair of them. Queen Ong-Bala used to sit on a high throne, but her vulva lay on the ground at her feet. She used to make all the men who came to serve her copulate with her; but that could not satisfy her. And then she had horses to copulate with her; but she was still unsatisfied.

At that time there was living in the village of Salim (a village on the far side of the river Talung, opposite Zongu) a man called Lablo Aring, whose penis was so enormous that he coiled it eight times round his waist, and still had enough left over at the end to gratify an ordinary woman. Queen Ong-Bala heard of him and sent two ambassadors to fetch him. They said "Our Queen has sent us to fetch you," and so he went with them. When he arrived at the palace the Queen was seated on her throne; she made Lablo sit down on the ground at her feet and had him fed with *chi* and rice and meat, and he drank eight *patyoot* of *chi* and ate eight seers of meat and a great heap of rice. Then the Queen spoke to him saying "Kam-dak nam ryou? Ka-tsong nam ryou?" (This means: "Is the millet harvest good? Is the maize harvest good?" and is a *tang-bor* referring to the male genitals.) Lablo replied "A-nyou, tuzi; nam ryu-am." (Thank you, lady; the harvest is quite good.) "If that is so," said the Queen, "let us sleep together." Lablo assented and undid one coil of his penis. "I thought you said the harvest was good!" the Queen exclaimed peevishly. "Is that all you can do?" Then he undid the second coil (*repeating repeats*). . . . When the seventh coil was undone the Queen exclaimed "Now I know the harvest was indeed good! Please stop." But Lablo refused; he undid and inserted the eighth coil and this hurt so much that the Queen cried out "Now at last I am satisfied! I want no servants and I want no horses!" When all was finished the Queen gave Lablo another good meal (*the menu given*) and sent him home to Salim; and to this day the men of Salim have big penises.

Now the Queen was made pregnant by this and eventually bore twin sons; the elder, called Tsayong, had only one eye in the centre of his forehead. The younger was named Dé-ong.

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When these sons were grown big the Queen made a plan to kill her brother the King. He was at the hot springs for his health, and she sent thither two supposed Tibetan doctors to advise him. But when the doctors were pretending to feel his pulse they really severed his arteries. As soon as the King realised what had happened he held the severed arteries in his hand and sent for his minister Yookshing Takshé and told him to go and revenge him and kill the Queen. Yookshing Takshé made his plan; he dressed in plain clothes without any weapons—not even a knife; and he presented himself at the Queen's palace with simply a scarf and a rupee in his hand. First of all the sentries refused to let him enter though he insisted that he must present the scarf and the coin to the Queen personally; but when they saw how harmless he was they let him pass. It was midday at the time and the Queen was sleeping; so the minister stuffed the scarf down her throat and thereby suffocated her; at the same moment the King let go the arteries he was holding and expired.

Yookshing Takshé returned to the King's palace and killed the two Tibetan doctors by catching them by their heels and throwing them in the river—for he was a very strong man. They did not burn the body of the King till they saw the smoke rising from the Queen's pyre. . . .

(This is the first instalment of one of the long stories which take a week to relate every evening after sunset. The continuation deals with the King's young son, whom the Queen's sons try to kill; he is rescued by the minister after a number of peripetiae. When this son grows up he lives as a farmer in the jungle until one day four people arrive and recognise him as king. His palace of Phyong Di is b[illegible] with the help of the people of Mayel. The King of Sikkim refuses to re[illegible]se the prophecy of his minister Lapchen Chimbu that the Gurkhas are going to invade the country; Lapchen Chimbu leaves, the Gurkhas invade; the King is with difficulty smuggled into Tibet, and a new royal line of Sikkim is started by the chief general.)

(*d*) FABLES—LUNGTHEN

(*Such as are told at weeding parties*)

Why the Leopard and Monkey are enemies.

Once upon a time a monkey and a stork (?) set up a pact of friendship. After they had done so they sat on different branches of a big tree, under which was deep mud, and competed as to who had the loudest voice. The monkey told the stork to shout first, but it refused so the monkey started. It shouted so loudly that it shook the tree, but the stork was not disturbed. Then the stork shouted fairly softly. "That's nothing," the monkey said. Then it shouted so loudly that the monkey fell off the tree and into the mud up to its neck and the stork flew away.

"Oh dear, I'll die; I'll starve to death," the monkey cried to itself. And it was almost starving when an elephant arrived. To it the monkey said "Are you not my elder brother? Please pull me out of this, and then you can kill me and eat me." But the elephant took no notice and went on. Then the rhinoceros . . . and puma (*two repeats*). . . . Then the wild goat arrived,

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539 but when the monkey had made his suggestion he refused and said "Others are following; they will free you." Then grandfather tiger . . . and the cheetah . . . (*two repeats*) passed. Then the leopard came and the monkey said "Please pull me out of this, and then you can boil me and eat me." But the leopard replied "No: I must go on with the others." But after it had gone on a little way the leopard thought to itself "I could get time to take that monkey out and boil it and eat it, and still catch up with the others" So it went back to the monkey and told it it had decided to accept its offer to eat it. "Very well," said the monkey. "First of all you must dig a pit, and get firewood and cooking stones, and you must take me out and dry me before I will be ready to cook."

The leopard did as he was told and put the monkey on a stone. "Po-gi na-gu" (come here, bending bamboo) cried the monkey. "What did you say?" asked the leopard. "I was asking you if you had got the fire and stones ready," replied the monkey. When the leopard was lighting the fire in the pit the monkey cried "Po-gi na-gu" again. "What's that?" asked the leopard. "I said turn me round so that I can dry on the other side," said the monkey. The leopard did so. "Po-gi na-gu," cried the monkey a third time. "What's that?" said the leopard. "I said you must go and fetch the water to boil me in," said the monkey. But this time the bending bamboo had heard the monkey's cry and it bent down and the monkey climbed up on to it and from that safe eminence shat all over the leopard. At this the leopard was angry and said "Henceforth there will be enmity between you and me. Now I shall hunt and kill and eat you always, night and day." And that is the reason why nowadays leopards kill and eat monkeys.

The origin of eating fish.

Once upon a time there lived in the Rangit river a devil which was partly a fish and partly a woman; it had long hair and breasts and a vulva. This was a very wicked devil which was destroying all the other fish; it did not kill them properly but bit pieces out of them. So Tashey-*thing* (or Guru Rimpuché; the story is told with either protagonist) decided to kill the fish; he made a bamboo fish trap, and after hunting the devil for three days he caught it and killed it. As a punishment for what the fish had done he cut up the body when it was killed; then he dug a pit and made a fire and heated two big stones; one big stone he put on the bottom of the pit; then he put in the fish's carcase; on that he put the other hot stone and covered everything up. Some hours later he uncovered the body; but it was very hot when he took it out and some fat got on his thumb. He shook it off and then put his scalded thumb into his mouth; and from that day onwards everybody can eat the flesh of fishes.

The story of the blackbird and the crab.

Once upon a time there was a blackbird which was flying round a bush catching insects, when he saw a crab with its great big staring eyes walking by the bush. The blackbird asked the crab what it was doing, to which the crab replied that it was very hungry and was looking for food. Then the blackbird suggested that they set up a pact of friendship; the crab agreed,

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and they then made their plans to go hunting the wild boar in the forest. The crab said "You take the wide path: I'll follow you," and in that order they went into the forest; the bird uttered its cry "Tcher tchir tchet" and caught a wild boar, but all it could do was to pull out one hair. This happened three times and eventually the crab got angry and said "You can't manage this, my friend; we'd better change places; I'll take the wide path and you follow." The crab laid down on the wide path with its claws open and caught the boar by its throat; the blackbird flew up from behind, and between them they killed the boar, cut up the meat and heaped it up into a big pile. But when all was ready for cooking they found they had no fire to cook it with, so the crab told the blackbird to go and look for some. 539

The blackbird set out and on its search came to the house of the she-devil Samoo. There he asked for fire and the she-devil asked "What do you want it for?" The blackbird said "We went out hunting so we couldn't carry any fire with us." The devil then gave him a firebrand but told the blackbird it must shake it all the way back. The blackbird took it back to the crab and the two of them cooked the meat; but the devil had followed the sparks and came to try and get the food. But the blackbird flew away with its portion into the tree and the crab took his into the water. Nevertheless they were very angry and the blackbird decided that they must kill the person who was trying to steal their meat. So he flew about in the forest and at last found some raw latex and dropped it all over the devil's body so that the devil was extremely unwell for several days.

When she finally recovered the devil decided to take her revenge. She therefore sewed up her anus and went to drink up all the water from the pool where the crab lived. She had drunk so much that the crab was visible on the bottom when the blackbird flew down and pecked open her anus so that all the water fell out and the pond was refilled. The devil was thus foiled three times, and got even angrier; so she went into the forest to look for latex, and covered her anus with it and started to drink the water again. When the crab was visible the blackbird flew down again, but this time its beak was caught in the latex. The devil immediately put the bird into a cage, and tied up the crab's claws. Then she returned to her home, hung up the blackbird in the cage and kept the crab with its claws tied up.

One day the two of them were basking in the sun, and the crab was very drowsy because it could find no water. The blackbird cried to the devil "Mother! Our friend must be dying! He has a most horrible stink; just take a sniff!" The devil leant over to smell the torpid crab, which thereupon grasped the devil's neck between its claws and killed her. Then the crab opened the blackbird's cage with its pincers and they both escaped, the bird to the trees, and the crab to the water.

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APPENDIX VI

A NOTE ON THE LEPCHA LANGUAGE

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Since I am no philologist, the following notes can only be of very slight value. I am giving them chiefly to account for my principle of transliteration.

Lepcha is said (Linguistic Survey of India) to belong to the Tibetan-Burman group of languages. It is non-pronominalised and not tonal. It is fundamentally a monsyllabic language, as was recognised in the alphabet invented by King Chador. This alphabet consists of 56 signs—the initial vowel a, 37 initial consonants, 10 vowels, indicated by diacritic marks, and 8 final consonants, also indicated by diacritic marks, with the result that each initial consonant with its diacritic marks represents a syllable and most usually a word. The initial consonants are: k, kl, kh, g, gl, ng, ch, chh, j, ny, t, th, d, n, p, pl, ph, f, fl, b, bl, m, ml, ts, tsh, z, y, r, l, h, hl, v, s, sh, w. TH and PH are aspirated (as in English ho*th*ouse) and J is always pronounced as in French *jamais*; otherwise the consonants (with the exception of the initial NG which has no equivalent in Western European languages) are pronounced much the same as in English. The final consonants are k, ng, t, n, p, r, l, m. The chief difficulty in transliteration has been the vowel sounds; the alphabet has ten vowel signs, long and short a, e, i, o, u: but, apart from the nuisance of employing diacritic marks in every word, Lepcha has a greater number of vowel sounds than this, and I have therefore used dipthongs, especially to represent the varied O and U sounds. I have employed the following combinations of letters:

a	as in hat
aa	„ balm, Haag (Dutch)
ah	„ ah! bas (French)
au	„ autumn
e	„ bet
é	„ make, été (French)
ee	„ beat
i	„ pit
i not followed by a consonant	„ sea
o	„ pot
oa	„ boat
oh	„ cocoa
oo	„ book
ou	„ you
u	„ but
u not followed by a consonant	„ Hugh, hue
eu	„ peu (French)
ü	„ über (German)
'	„ petit (French) behave.

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193 Although fundamentally monosyllabic a great number of Lepcha words have modifying prefixes which are always used in conjunction with the word to give a different sense, so that practically the words have become bisyllables. There are no true polysyllables, though the addition of modifying prefixes and suffixes may produce polysyllables. In bisyllables the stress is usually on the second syllable.

A distinguishing feature of Lepcha is the initial a-, which is added to a great many monosyllables. The existence of this a- appears to depend entirely on euphony; it is always suppressed in compound words and often in speech.. Thus *a-nyou* (lady) becomes Narzong-*nyou* (Lady Narzong—a goddess); *a-mu* (mother) becomes *ma-thim* (Big mother) and so on. Euphony is also the reason for a number of varying features in Lepcha speech; thus the plural suffix is *-song*, *-ʒong*, or *-pong* according to the sound of the word to which it is suffixed.

There is no true gender in Lepcha, though a certain number of kinship terms and words definitely implying sex (male and female mammals e.g.) have gender connotations. There is no gender distinction in the third person pronouns.

The stems of words are modified only in the case of the three singular pronouns, which have different stems for the nominative and objective cases.

Nominative	accusative	genitive	dative
(I) go	kasum	kasi	kasum
(thou) Ho	a-dom	a-do	a-dom
(he) Hu	ha-dom	ha-do	hum

In all other nouns and pronouns the genitive is indicated by the suffix *-sa*, ideas of motion by *-ka*, ideas of direction by *-rem* and ideas of action (ablative) by *-nun*. These suffixes are not added if the sense is clear otherwise.

Verbs are not modified to express the idea of number, but there are a great number of suffixes to indicate time and mood. The distinction between nouns and verbs is arbitrary; many nouns can receive verbal suffixes, and verbal nouns can be produced by the addition of *-shang* or *-lung* to the stem.

The sentence order indicates the sense to a great extent. Qualifying genitives precede the noun they qualify; indirect objects precede direct objects, and the operative verb comes at the end of the sentence. As an illustration of Lepcha syntax I am giving part of the first paragraph of the last fable in Appendix V (The story of the blackbird and the crab) with a literal translation.

193 539 *Iaka chahim-fo dyap-ka a-fi a-chu leum-long tam-bik tsaam. Otetka*
Formerly chahim-bird bush-at hither thither fly-doing insect catch. Then

o-re dyap-ka taki kat amik kleup-kleup lom-am si. Chahim-fo-nun
that-one bush-at crab one eye blinking walk-ing see. Chahim-bird-by

taki-rem vet "Ho abi shu ʒuk-am go?" Tahi-nun li "Go abi
crab-to ask "Thou there what doing indeed?" Crab-by say "I there

kreadok-nun aʒom dong-am." Otet-ka chahim-fo-nun ta-hi-rem ingʒong
hunger-been food search." That-at chahim-bird-by crab-to ingzong

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thik-ba : *eunun hanni nyet ingzong thik* . *Eunun mun-dyak-shang hanni* 193
set-up-would : then they two ingzong set-up. Then meat-pursue-to they 539

nyet toot-mat . *Nyet-la mon-tseu-mon dyak-shang toot-mat* .
two advice-make. Two indeed boar- pig pursue-to advice-make.

Eunun nyet-la panjok-ka nong. Tahi-nun li " *Ho are pyong-ka ding-o*
Then two-indeed forest-to go. Crab-by say " Thou this path-at walk-do

eunun go-re dyak-lung di-shu." *Otet-ka thung-do tahi-do dyak-lung*
then I indeed follow-ing come-will." Then- at really crab-indeed following

lom pyong-ka loong-lat. Chahim-fo-nun-sa alik tcher tchir tchet liklung
road path-on travel-did. Chahim-bird-by-of cry tcher tchir tchet cry-ing

mon-tseu-mon-rum cher sen-la a-tsang kat kat-aa kup [illegible] . *Otetka*
boar-pig-at catch but hair one only small pull-out. Then

tahi-re sak-lyak " *Ta-tsong-a ho ma-keut-ne : a-long a-do pa-lo*
crab-that angry " Friend-oh thou not-can-not : therefore thee after

dyak-nu pyong-ka go ding-shu."
follow-do path-on I walk-shall."

[p. 496 is blank]

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VOCABULARY OF LEPCHA WORDS

104 (*Note*: I am not giving in this vocabulary words and phrases which are only used once with an immediate translation. I have not thought it worth while in so short a vocabulary to distinguish true Lepcha words from Tibetan loan words; most of the words connected with lamaism are derived from the Tibetan.

I have listed all words beginning with an initial A- under the second letter, as this initial A- is constantly elided in Lepcha.)

a-Bek	between.
bek-bu	(lit.) between-man; man who arranges marriages.
ben (or ta-ben)	vulva.
bi	vegetable stew: 'curry'.
bri	marriage feast, when the bride comes to her husband's home.
Chapti-bu	lowest grade of lama.
chap-tok	validating feast given by lamas.
ché-né	(1) lamaist priest. (2) lamaist ceremony.
cher-kem	offering to devils made either by laymen or lamas during lamaist ceremonies: consists of mixed grains floating in strained *chi* which is thrown on to the ground with a wooden spoon to the cry of "*Lo chi-do*"—take this.
chi	Lepcha beer: made by pouring boiling water on to fermented millet or other grain: drunk hot.
chi-chembu	a lamaist grade—'resting canon'.
chi-mi	altar lights; egg-cup-shaped metal containers filled with oil or butter with a wick of cloth or bamboo.
chithembu	a lamaist grade: monastery overseer.
cho-bu	(lit.) book-man: a lama.
cho-ten	a rectangular lamaist barrow with religious formulae carved on the stones at the side; sometimes a tomb, sometimes empty.
chongbu-tipkū	twisted pieces of dough which form part of the sacrificial objects in lamaist ceremonies and which are usually waved over the person, for whom the ceremony is performed, at the end of the ceremony.
Da-floh	a ceremonial dance in front of a lamaist altar.
dé-ong	the 'parlour' in Lepcha houses: the second room often

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	containing a lamaist altar, in which lamaist ceremonies are performed.
deu	'palace of the supernatural'; a geometrical construction of coloured thread on a bamboo support: may be anything from three inches to ten feet high: varies according to which (lamaist) ceremony it is made for.
dorjé	thunderbolt; small brass object in higher-grade lama's private religious objects.
dorjé Lapoon	highest grade of lama: teacher.
doam	leprosy.
a-dum	white.
Elaiji (Nepali)	cardamum
a-Faar	price.
faat	sacrifice (Mun).
fleng	youth: adult man who has not yet begotten a child.
fo	bird.
Ga-zook	the head, one fore-leg and one hind-leg of the animal sacrificed by a Mun.
gé-long	celibate lama
gya-pōn	village official: a temporary post.
Hloang-zok	a feast given by the Mandal to all the villagers to clear one of their number from debt or to get contributions for his marriage expenses.
In-é-bu	nun; in lamaist monastery.
ing-ha	infant.
ing-zong	trading friend, with whom a ceremonial pact of friendship has been made. *Also* used loosely to mean 'my special friend'.
Jyut-bu (-mu)	adopting father (or mother).
jem-mi	The old Lepcha title for the Mandal, the village headman.
jethi (Nepali)	(lit.) eldest sister; elder co-wife.
Kané	lamaist grade: assistant to higher lamas.
kanchi (Nepali)	(lit.) youngest sister; younger co-wife.
kanya	trader and money-lender.
ké	tax.
ké-bu	tax-payer, tenant, house-holder.
ké-tsop	(lit.) substitute tax-(payer); heir appointed by the Mandal to administer property if the real heir is an infant, or to possess it if there are no heirs in direct succession.
ket ma-ni-ne	it is of no consequence.
king-koor	lamaist altar in private house.
klon	(honorific word) to present.
ko-chet	a good child (lit. one who understands).

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komok myok	resident son-in-law: man living in his wife's house.
kongso-klon	a mystic lamaist ceremony performed in a *tyang-gong* to drive away devils.
koong	(1) tree (2) house-pillar (3) mountain peak.
a-kup	child: small thing.
kup-tsop	(lit.) substitute child: adopted child.
a-kut	a symbolical present of a piece of cooked meat, accepted by parents-in-law instead of the bride-price from a poor but otherwise suitable groom.
La-fét	(lit.) winnowing tray; the Mun sacrifice made on a winnowing tray, on which is placed first banana leaves, then grain, ginger, dried bird, dried fish, etc.; one of the commonest Mun ceremonies.
lapoon	lamaist teacher.
la-yo	sin (in the lamaist sense).
lha	lamaist god.
lha-gong	the room in the monastery containing the big prayer-wheels; under the supervision of the nuns.
li	house.
lo-kor	the 12-year animal cycle; the representations of these twelve years.
loong	qualification to do or perform something; the ceremony by which a teacher acknowledges his pupil's efficiency.
lung-then	(1) old-established custom. (2) stories of how things are as they are to-day: fables.
lyang	place.
Mak	die: dead.
mandal	the head of the village.
mani	abbreviation of the formula *Om! Mani pudme hum!*: prayer-flags so inscribed set up for the dead.
a-mik	eye.
mik-dum	(lit.) white eyes; an uncomplimentary word for Europeans.
mik-jit	(lit.) eye piss: envy.
a-mik hér	evil eye; a person who has seen grain drying in the sun before everybody has made the offerings to the Men of Mayel.
moong	devil: evilly-disposed supernatural.
muktair	the head of a group of villages.
mun	a man or woman possessed by the Mun spirit: a priest of the Lepcha religion.
mun-then	private contemplation in which a Mun enters into communication with his possessing spirit.
myok	son-in-law: bridegroom.
Nam	year.
nam-toak	a year of disaster; the punishment which threatens the community if one of its members commits a very grave social crime such as incest.

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nan-djé-mu	a woman who dances possessed by a supernatural and in that state can divine.
num-neu-zong	blood relations; people with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous.
num-leng	an adult girl who has not yet borne a child.
nyom	daughter-in-law: bride.
a-nyou	lady; title given to Queens, supernaturals, mothers-in-law (by men), sisters of parents.
Omzet	high lamaist rank: 'bishop'.
ook	shame.
oong	water.
oong-op	potential levirate or sororate spouse; person with whom sexual intercourse is permissive.
Pa-dem	man possessed by Padem spirit; similar to, but weaker than Mun.
pa-hip	'straw'; a thin species of bamboo through which *chi* is drunk.
pan-di	queen.
pan-kar	thonged stick kept in monastery to be used by *chithembu* if people misbehave.
pa-no	king.
pa-tyoot	'tankard'; a ten-inch section of bamboo with a natural fibrous bottom from which *chi* is drunk.
pau	a male nan-djé-mu.
pék	the act of waving some object over a real or potential sufferer; the curative and cleansing rite of Mun and, to a less extent, lamas.
pong	sticks with bits of wool on, in lamaist ceremonies always placed besides *deu* to represent the clouds surrounding the supernatural's palace.
ptso	the patrilineal group.
Rong	Lepcha.
rum	(1) god: benevolently-disposed supernatural. (2) a Mun offering to the gods or devils, consisting in a basket filled with earth, into which are inserted a number of containers of various sorts of food and drink, etc.
rum-faat-bu	the sacrificer or officiant at Mun ceremonies; need not necessarily be a Mun; many ceremonies can be performed by any old man with *loong*.
rum-lyang	(lit.) place of the gods; the place where, according to Mun eschatology the soul lives before and after life.
Sa-dher	'thunder-bird'—'dragon'.
sak-lyak	(1) angry; (2) sexually excited.
sa-kyou	butter.
sakyou-faat	(lit.) butter sacrifice; the chief Mun sacrament, consisting of drinking strained *chi* out of a cup on the rim of which dabs of butter have been placed.

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sang-lion	The Mun and lamaist ceremonies for conducting the soul of the dead from this world to the next.
a-sék	(1) betrothal, the payment of the bride-price; (2) the formal adoption of a child (not closely related): the payment of the price of such a child.
sé-pano	sahib; complimentary term for European.
sha-fot	the heart, liver and lungs of the sacrifical animal in a Mun sacrifice.
shadong ding	'the sulks'; fit a of bad temper when a hungry or irritated person breaks things, throws stones etc.
s'lek	a dioeceous plant found above the snow level which Mun prepare and give as amulets against devils.
sing	'field garden'; a piece of fenced ground by the house in which are grown vegetables, grain, bamboos, etc.
Ta-foot	some internal organ, spleen or gall-bladder?
tam-toom	the ineluctable result of some antecedent act; may affect the actor or his descendants.
ta-né	bad child.
tang-bor	an elegant periphrasis for a common-speech word.
tan-ji	a genito-urinary disease; possibly a very mild form of gonorrhea.
thimbu	big.
a-thing	lord; title given to supernaturals and very important men.
thip-song	the ceremony which has to be performed when an unmarried girl is pregnant with a bastard to ward off the hail.
thop-song	the living-room in a Lepcha house: 'the kitchen'.
thyak	head (part of body).
thyak-dum	(lit.) white head; the ambivalent 'house goblin'.
tik (or ta-tik)	penis.
tong-peun-bu	a low grade of lamas: 'choristers'.
tsop	substitute.
tuk	a mat used as head protection against sun and rain: an 'umbrella'.
tyang-gong	a completely dark room in which lamas shut themselves up for mystic contemplation and practices.
tyol	friend (an unemotional word).
tyü	sacred water, over which lamas have prayed and into which various things have been placed.
Vyim	wood which produces a red dye.
Yaba (fem. Yama)	possessed priests similar to nandjému.
yeumbu	(lit.) one who knows; a wise old man.
yook-mun	(lit.) honoured Mun: a lama.
you-sui	a consultant village official, chosen from ex-gyapön.
a-Zong	potential levirate or sororate spouse.

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Lepcha AK5

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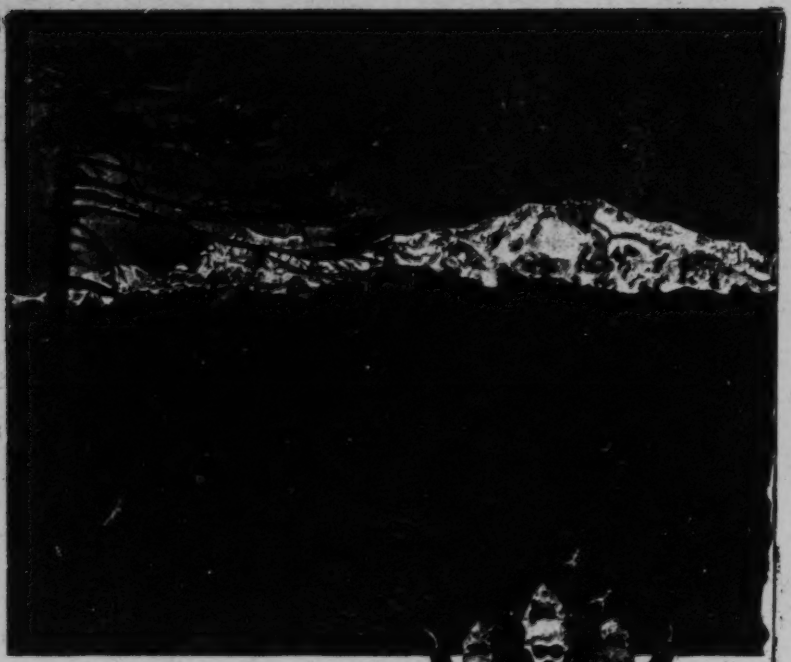

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Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

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LIVING WITH LEPCHAS

A BOOK ABOUT THE SIKKIM HIMALAYAS

By JOHN MORRIS

Who also took the Photographs which illustrate it

★

WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD

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[p. iii]

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To

REBECCA WEST

because she knows all about people
and can describe their characters in a line,
which I can never hope to do;
and for innumerable other reasons.

[p. v]
[p. vi is blank]

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A NOTE TO THE READER

I USED TO THINK that T. E. Lawrence was being merely 104
facetious when he refused to write Arabic words in conformity with any known system of transliteration. But I have come to think, with him, that "there are some 'scientific systems' of transliteration, helpful to people who know enough Arabic [but this applies just as much to other oriental languages] not to need helping, but a wash-out for the world. I spell my names anyhow," he continues, "to show what rot the systems are." (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*)

I would not go quite so far as this, however, and would willingly use any system that gave a reader, one with no previous knowledge of the subject, some idea of the actual sounds of Lepcha words. But the Lepcha language is full of Tibetan, in the transliteration of which even the experts have so far failed to agree. What, for instance, can one make of a word like *Bye-brag-tu rtogs byad* (this really is a Tibetan word), which one of the leading exponents of Lamaism tells me is pronounced *Je-tak-tu tog-je?* (Waddell: page 165).

But enough of this nonsense! It only remains to add that I have spelt Lepcha and Tibetan words as they sounded to me when spoken by a Lepcha, giving the vowels approximately their Italian value, and using the consonants as in English. This is near enough for all practical purposes: but, in any case, no one who reads this book is likely to want to know how to pronounce Tibetan or Lepcha; and if he does, I feel sure that the London School of Oriental Studies would be delighted to teach him.

I have generally written Tibetan and Lepcha words in italics only the first time that I have used them, but have occasionally departed from this custom for the sake of emphasising some particular word.

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL

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CHAPTER I

Some Contrasts and an Introduction to the Lepchas

ON the first of April 1937 His Majesty the King sent the following message to the peoples of India:

"To-day, the first of April, part of those constitutional reforms upon which Indians and British alike have bestowed so much thought and work comes into operation.

"I cannot let the day pass without assuring my Indian subjects that my thoughts and good wishes are with them on this occasion.

"A new chapter is thus opening and it is my fervent hope and prayer that the opportunities now available to them will be used wisely and generously for the lasting benefit of all my Indian people.

"George R.I."

* * * * *

"The throne room at Government House, Calcutta," notes *The Statesman* of Friday, 2nd April 1937, "was yesterday the scene of a brief but historic ceremony when His Excellency the Governor administered the oath of allegiance, office, and secrecy to the Premier, Mr. Fazlul Huq, and members of the Bengal Ministry.

"The Premier and eleven Ministers occupied a circular table immediately in front of the *dais*, each being presented to His Excellency by the Chief Secretary. The Premier and Ministers repeated the three oaths, sentence by sentence, after His Excellency.

"Similar ceremonies were held in all other provincial headquarters, except in the United Provinces where no Ministry has as yet been formed.

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000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

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The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

782
291

Kahlyen and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

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Looking east from the monastery. The central peak is Paubunri, and the ridge of which it forms a part is the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim.

[facing p. 5]

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782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

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782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
581 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

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as good as another. Although the two places are so near in 181
terms of modern travel, in everything else Talung is thousands of years behind, looked at, that is, from what our unhappy machine-age (but actually slave-driven) civilisation is pleased to regard as progress. Talung has neither drains nor electric light; nor, more fortunately, any newspapers; but its inhabitants are happy and, all things considered, contented. A few, a very few, of the people had heard vague and distorted rumours of the Great War (that which did not end war): none, however, so far as I know, had heard of India's new constitution, nor even of King George the Sixth, and the day of the Coronation passed unnoticed, except in so far as it was a fine day and so permitted a full day's work in the fields.

My first view of the Talung was in the spring of 1936, on 114
the way to Everest. We did not enter the valley since our 133
road lay straight through Sikkim to the plains of Tibet, and there was no time for excursions off the route. But from Singhik bungalow one looks right up the valley to Kinchinjunga at its head, one of the most spectacular sights in the whole Himalaya. But on this occasion we did not see the mountain, which was hidden in cloud, and the valley itself looked grim and uninviting, with patches of winter snow still lying in the shadier parts of the higher slopes. When we returned in July the valley was deep in mist and filled with small clouds which looked like floating wads of cotton-wool; but even at this distance many shining patches of emerald cultivation were clearly visible on the steep hillsides, although we could see no villages.

During the previous autumn I had been staying in Nepal, 114
hoping, amongst other things, to get permission to round off my ethnological studies of the people (which I had been pursuing intermittently for years) by a stay of some months in an actual Gurkha village. My proposals proved unacceptable to the Maharaja, who found it impossible to make any exception to the rule, laid down by his predecessors and never once relaxed, by which no European is permitted to

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114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other [144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans 177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of 619] tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with 609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

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resenting the intrusion of strangers. He told me that a few years ago, during an epidemic of small-pox, he had sent a vaccinator across to the valley in order to afford the people protection from the disease. But as soon as the man crossed the bridge the people fled from their houses and took to the forest, only returning when he became tired of waiting and went back to Gangtok. So far as I was concerned this story only added zest to the chase; and before leaving for England I arranged to return to Sikkim in the following spring.

On a previous occasion when I was in England, in 1934 I think it was, I had met Geoffrey Gorer at the house of a mutual friend, and we had carried on an intermittent correspondence ever since. In the meantime he had spent some months in America, and while there had met Dr. Ruth Benedict, whose remarkable *Patterns of Culture* has influenced many of the younger and more open-minded ethnologists. As a result of working both with her and with Dr. Margaret Mead, the best-known exponent of her ideas, Geoffrey decided that he wanted to see for himself just exactly what field ethnology was all about, so I said he could come and help me, little thinking that he would accept. We were, now that I come to think of it, a most oddly assorted couple: Geoffrey, a self-acknowledged gourmet, and never really happy when too long away from the centre of things; and I, who can hardly tell the difference between caviare and tinned salmon, and to whom civilisation (so called) is a thing to be escaped from at all costs for as long and as often as possible. Also, according to Geoffrey, I have strong masochistic tendencies; and since I am passionately devoted to mountains and mountaineering a well-developed "death wish"; but in his view nearly all violent exercise is merely a method of punishing oneself. Before taking to ethnology I had been for nearly twenty years in the regular army; but as for this it was, in Geoffrey's words, "only occasionally apparent." Actually, all this boils down to the fact that he belongs to that post-war generation to whom (quite rightly) freedom of every sort is all, whereas I grew up in an earlier

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114 age and was taught to believe that a measure of self-discipline was good for the soul. We never had a quarrel, but doubtless got on one another's nerves from time to time. In view of the fact that our life in Sikkim alternated between intense hard work and complete but unavoidable boredom this was almost inevitable.

114 These personal details would normally be of no interest to
121 anyone but our own selves. I have inserted them here, however, because, to me at least, it seems important in reading a description of a foreign culture to know how the writer fits into his own. It is almost impossible (and would be extremely dull) to describe the customs of a people entirely objectively; and so it follows that my description of Lepcha home life is inevitably coloured, and possibly limited, by my own outlook. I have concentrated on the things that interested me. Fortunately for us both, Geoffrey was interested mostly in other aspects and is writing a psychological study of the people from the Freudian and Marxist points of view. Our two books, therefore, while dealing (more or less) with the same subject, will have little in common; and in addition I have drawn on my notes and memories of previous journeys in Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet.

121 According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ethnography is the "scientific description of races of men." I can make no such claim for the following account, which, although the
[122] work was carried out under the auspices of the William Wyse Foundation (University of Cambridge), which awarded me its studentship in Social Anthropology, pretends to be no more than a plain unvarnished description of some four months' residence in a Lepcha village. It is not intended for experts and assumes no previous knowledge. The "scientific description" of the culture as a whole, in which we hope to collaborate, may possibly follow later, but will not be ready for some considerable time.

* * * * *

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

We left Marseilles towards the end of November 1936 on the N.Y.K. *Terukuni Maru*. I had stipulated for this partly because I wanted to see Ceylon, and partly because long experience had already decided me that as soon as I ceased to have the privilege of travelling at the expense of His Majesty's Government I would give foreign shipping a trial: also there would be no organised games. But in this I was wrong; for the Japanese appear to be even more addicted to this particular form of torture than are the British; and on the *Terukuni Maru* the only difference was that the irritating thud of the shuffle-board quoit started earlier and went on later than on any boat on which I have previously travelled. The captain, who spoke perfect English, took us all over the ship and it was gratifying to notice that most of the engine-room equipment was made in Britain. The watches here were exactly the same as on British boats, but the cabin and dining-room stewards seemed never off duty. We were not permitted to see their quarters. I once asked our cabin steward how much he was paid, but he would not tell me. He merely smiled and bowed politely: "Sir, very, very little," he said. All that one had previously heard of Japanese politeness is true: one was bowed in and out of meals, on to and off the decks, and on every other possible occasion; and nothing was too much trouble. We found most of the Japanese passengers charming, the one exception being a minor diplomat who was returning on leave. The purser agreed that he was not calculated to impress foreigners with the charm of his countrymen; but it appears that this attitude is not now uncommon with "progressive" Japanese, who are inclined to drop their innate national politeness (in place of which they have so far nothing else to put), thinking this to be the outward and visible sign of Western efficiency. The English passengers, mostly planters and business officials, were of no interest and of the type which form the background to any of Mr. Maugham's incomparable novels. We reached Colombo on the sixth of December.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha
India AW1

This is no place to chronicle our progress through Ceylon, which remains for me the ideal country in which to do nothing. After long years in India, however, it was a complete surprise to note the efficiency with which the country is run: wayside dak bungalows complete with bedding and refrigerators, to say nothing of excellently served meals, of which wild boar, venison and the best honey I have ever tasted, often formed part. Also it was a relief to be able to travel by train without humping one's bedding about, a luxury which the Indian Railways steadfastly refuse to permit their passengers to enjoy.

After a week of intensive sightseeing, having done our duty by the guide-book, we crossed to India. Here are a few extracts from a diary I wrote at the time:

"15*th December:* Got off the train at Madura and went straight off to see the temple. This is the best 'spectacle' I have ever seen in India and is pure *Arabian Nights* (unexpurgated version). Reminds me of a 'super' film, produced regardless of cost. Most unspiritual and everything done for show. A great deal of money being squandered by the poor [778] on offerings to priests and garlands of jasmine flowers to hang round the idols' necks; and outside the temple every sign of the most degrading poverty. Horrible mean-looking people for the most part, who give one the impression of indulging in every kind of secret vice (according to the Abbé Dubois this part of India is the home of the most erotic secret sects, and it certainly looks as though he is right).

"16*th December:* On to Tanjore. Easily the best temple in [341] South India. Good use made of open spaces, and one does not get the impression of everything being 'cluttered up,' as in most of these places. The official guide here was an odd [771] Brahman who does not believe in Hinduism and says he only [529] wears his thread so that he may enter Brahman 'coffe houses,' an institution I have not previously come across in Northern India. Insists on buying us a drink after dinner and says he would like to collaborate (I wonder what in?), but is obviously a bit tight.

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French India AY2

"17*th December:* To Cuddalore, where Reginald Schom- 361
berg's car was waiting to take us on to Pondicherry, the capital town of French India. Pondicherry looks rather like an old town in the Nîmes or Arles district; everything decaying, and plaster falling off all the walls; pot-holes and puddles [491]
all over the main street. In the middle of the road a large notice saying '*Ralentir—Travaux*'; but no 'travaux' visible; only a couple of Tamil coolies fast asleep behind the notice board. There might be good sea bathing but Schomberg says this is out of the question, since the whole foreshore is used as a Tamil latrine. The British Consulate-General, in the main street, is ramshackle and uncomfortable, and is said originally to have been a brothel. This seems likely since the accommodation consists of a large *salon* with numerous small rooms leading off it. The French and native (Ville Noire) 563
parts of the town are separated by a dirty little canal. [487]
Formerly no native was allowed in the European quarter after nine at night, even personal servants; but this rule no longer holds good, but none of the European houses has any servants' quarters. Pondicherry is nowadays chiefly used for 439
the purpose of smuggling cheap Japanese goods, mostly silk, into British India. This is difficult to control, since the French are uninterested and Pondicherry is not, as the maps [361]
would lead one to expect, one large area but a number of small plots, some of them only an acre in extent, surrounded by British territory. Moreover, smuggling is an easy way for 439
the native officials to add to their meagre incomes, and 636
inevitable while the French continue to underpay their subordinate colonial officials. The local French go about in 493
large Bath chairs, called *Pousse-pousse*, pushed by a couple of perspiring Tamils. I notice that even in this hot damp 291
climate the middle-aged French *bourgeoise* still sticks to her voluminous black woollens. Also the cemetery is un- 765
mistakably French: enormous monuments, some with photographs of the deceased inset, and the usual plentiful array of mauve bead wreaths."

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Gurkha AK4

000 On arrival at Madras, which an Indian writer, Mr. R. K. Narayan, describes as "hot for ten months of the year and hotter for two," we found a railway strike in progress; and since there was no boat on to Calcutta for a week after our arrival we did not reach that place until the last day of December. There was nothing to detain us in Calcutta except the fine collection of Indian paintings and sculpture in the museum, and for that a full morning was sufficient. There is nothing of architectural interest in the city, unless one includes the recently-completed Victoria Memorial. Of this it is reported that a famous continental architect burst into tears as soon as he beheld it: "What a pity," he said; "and such lovely material!"

Near Government House there are a number of bronze statues of retired viceroys. Once, when I was passing through Calcutta, I had with me a Gurkha orderly, and to pass the time before our train left in the evening I took him all over the city. The only thing that really interested him was this double row of defunct pro-Consuls, to which he asked to be
G taken a second time. I asked him why. "Well," he said,
[565 "with us, you know, a dark skin is a sign of inferior birth;
826] but you people, you bring out great men from England to rule the country and then put up statues which show them with black faces: or is it that they go that colour when they die?"

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114 After a month or so in Kalimpong, during which we struggled each morning with the intricacies of Lepcha grammar, we left for Gangtok, travelling on foot in order to give Geoffrey a chance to see something of the country, which was new to him. As a concession to his hedonistic tendencies I agreed to keep on our cook, who demanded (and obtained) the unheard-of wage of fifty-five rupees a month. I had never before travelled in such luxury, usually contenting myself with one general drudge-of-all-work and the absolute minimum of cooking apparatus. This time,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114 plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114 one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124 liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191] Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these [197] were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534] earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 horribly familiar strains of "Abide with me," slightly out of
124 tune, issuing from the house next door in which he and the servants lived. I never made any effort to restrain him, for which I hope to receive due credit in any future existence which may be my lot.

Sukra Sing was what in India is technically known as a "compounder," which means that he had worked in a hospital for some months, knew a certain amount (in his case a dangerous amount) of simple doctoring and first-aid methods, and was authorised to "compound," or make up medicines to prescription, without, however, being responsible if he inadvertently confused aconite with aqua. He
[797] was also under training as a missionary and was working under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries are rightly interested less in obtaining "scalps" than in improving the people's condition, the only possible excuse, in my opinion, for missionary work amongst primitive peoples. I shall have more to say about missionary activities later on in this book; but in the meantime I cannot help thinking that Sukra Sing will now go out into the field with considerably more tolerance for his "uncivilised" Lepcha brethren than would otherwise have been the case. He was fortunately not musical, but showed signs towards the end of our stay of a wakening interest in the flute. Dhawa, however, preferred to play solo.

* * * * *

114 We left Gangtok without any very clear idea of our exact
636 destination. His Highness had suggested Jongu as being the most suitable place in which to commence our studies; and so to Jongu we set off. No one was quite sure of the exact position of this place; nor was the Ordnance Survey map helpful, for it omitted all trace of this, to us at least, important place. On arrival at Mangen, however, where we were to leave the main trade route through Sikkim, the mystery was solved, for it there transpired that Jongu was not a village but a district; a district, moreover, which stretched from roughly

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Tempa.

Grandfather.

[facing p. 16]

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Lingtem Monastery.

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Storm clouds over Kinchinjunga.

[facing p. 17]

2: Morris T-5 (1937/1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
[491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000
unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114
the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793
Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346
two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822]
it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778]
altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373
away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782]
either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather
startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange
projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at
every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for
it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number.
It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I
had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the
English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical
with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several
fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen,
which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of
ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks'
feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon
designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams
above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded
me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pan-
tomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de
Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was
put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep,
was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly
gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning
we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-
bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its
solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to
exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

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Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

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[facing p. 22]

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Looking west from the monastery, with my favourite tree in the foreground, and Kinchinjunga in the background.

[facing p. 23]

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888at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322] especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, [137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

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windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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123 spend most of our time with such of the people as were really willing to talk. One or two were genuinely interested in their history and customs and with them we spent most of our days.

I had been taught at Cambridge to avoid asking questions: the ideal method was so to observe and absorb a culture that mere questioning became almost superfluous. It was essential to live in close contact with the people. In our particular case, however, this was not possible. Even had we chosen to live with a Lepcha family we should have been in no better position to observe what was happening at the other end of the village: its very grouping militated against working in ideal conditions, however long we stayed. When we got to know the people better we did of course visit them in their houses, and were always present when a ceremony was being performed. There is much to be said for "going native" and I have always envied those whose digestions can stand it. The alternative method, however, does permit one to see things from a completely detached standpoint, whereas the "native" soon learns to take many things for granted. After all, how many of us could explain our own culture to a Lepcha, for instance, in such a way that nothing was taken for granted?

We would usually start a conversation on some selected topic; but once an informant was well away we let him have his head. Thus, we might start with war and finish with abortion: all was grist for the ethnological mill. The following account is built up from such oddments of information; an uncompleted jigsaw with doubtless many pieces wrongly placed. Its main pattern, I hope, is clear, but I make no claim to be infallible. In any case I must again remind the reader that this is a purely personal account, tinged with my likes and dislikes. I have tried as far as possible to be objective; but like Mr. Dick I, too, have my King Charles's head.

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CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, 131 with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys 132 and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal 574 safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and 609 hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman [22] always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

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491 As for the roads, these, including the bridges, are all easily negotiable by the most timid. Those of active habit may walk all the marches without excessive fatigue, the more leisurely-inclined may ride on ponies, readily obtainable from Darjeeling, while ladies, not equal to the exertion, may be carried in dandies over all the bungalow routes."

Tours in Sikkim.

Awful influence of the Lakeland poets.

000 "For persons travelling solely for pleasure, and without any specific hobby, the visions of the snows, the ever-changing effects of light and shadow on the frost-clad mountains, the fragrant air of the woodlands, or the life-giving breezes of the mountain-tops will be joys sufficient in themselves, while those interested in any special pursuit such as sketching, photography, botany, natural history, etc., will find Sikkim an ideal field for these occupations."

Ibid.

Sikkim can be particularly recommended for the study of "etc.," which, I must confess, is my chosen hobby.

You have been warned!

"Ladies will find woollen knickers or combinations a comfort when crossing the higher passes."

Ibid.

How to travel.

PART I. PROFESSIONAL.

"It will be found most satisfactory to walk down hill and ride up, a method of progression best for man and beast. The *syces* should be made to follow close, and they may carry light things such as hand-cameras, field-glasses, waterproofs and articles which may be required from time to time on the march. A halt for lunch may be made at any pretty or convenient place, and the tiffin-coolie should be able to make all the arrangements for an alfresco meal. He should never be far away while on the march, and a good man will

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

understand this and follow accordingly. In case of accident, however, the traveller may carry an emergency ration of plain chocolate in his pocket. A small collapsible cup for drinking purposes, carried in the pocket, may be useful on warm marches, while a *chagal* (water-bottle), slung on the *syce*, may be considered. A spirit-lamp outfit will soon boil a kettle of tea, but the tiffin-man will make a fire and boil the water in almost the same time. A quicker plan still is to bring hot tea in a 'Thermos' flask; it is then ready at once. To prevent this being broken it should be kept in a padded bag stuffed with coconut coir and drawn in at the top with a tape. After lunch the coolie will generally roughly wash up and pack, while his master proceeds on the march. To save expense it is possible to do without the tiffin-coolie and take sandwiches and cake, etc., in a small packet to be carried by the *syce*.

"In ordinary circumstances the destination should be reached about tea-time, and if fine and warm you may have this meal on the veranda, while looking out on the new prospect. If you should arrive ahead of the coolies, the cook and tiffin-coolie will certainly be present, and tea will soon be available, provided these two men are up to the mark. If not too tired you may explore the neighbourhood until dark, and then order dinner. A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in, and 'so to bed.' The *sirdar* may come in for orders for the morrow or to ask about the food, and if his day's work has been satisfactory he may be rewarded with the equivalent of 'you have done very well,' which will please him, before he retires for the night."

Ibid.

PART 2. AMATEUR.

"Wet to the skin, and almost starving, having had nothing but chocolate to eat since our meagre *chota hazirei* in the morning, we sat down on the wet rug to await the coolies. It was about 5 p.m., and we had over two hours to wait.

000 Nazir had forgotten or lost the matches entrusted to him, and we could get neither light nor fire. The best part of the time was spent in trying native dodges to obtain a spark, in which D. took an active interest, but the wood was not the right kind, and was, besides, so wet that nothing could be done. Toomhang, the Lepcha, was with us, as he always preferred to be when not actually ordered to keep with and bring up the coolies as he should have done, but we liked gossiping with the fine old man, who was of much too gentle a nature to be a coolie driver. When he told us there would be at least five feet of snow on Tiphu at our last camping ground, by the morning, we knew he was right, and consoled ourselves for all our troubles at the thought of the happy escape we had had."

FLORENCE DONALDSON, 1900.

The roads.

"The *pugdandy* (footpath) now led us up the hill, and the hard climbing we had to do helped to take my thoughts off an experience calculated to unnerve one. In some places [417] we had to scale a projecting rock by means of two pieces of the trunk of a tree with notches at alternate intervals to put one's feet in. This Sikkim style of Jacob's ladder is well enough for the barefooted native, but not at all easy for the leather-shod European. I had looped up my habit skirt before starting, but found it very much in the way all the morning." (But you would probably have found it easier walking in those woollen knickers.)

Ibid.

Sikkim bungalows (old style).

485 "There were two rooms in the curiously constructed rest-house; the floor and roof being of the same material and as fragile as the walls. We had to take off our boots before we could walk on the yielding floor. Our camp bedsteads would have gone through it, so our bedding was spread on the raised floor which had all the effect of a spring bed,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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Lepcha boy.

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"A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in"; being otherwise a candid portrait of the author. (*Photograph by F. S. Smythe, reproduced by permission of the Mount Everest Committee*, 1936).

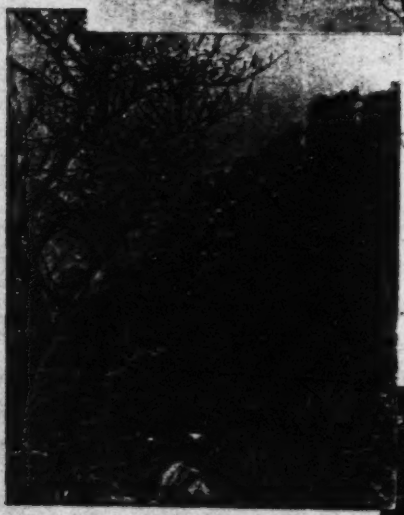
[facing p. 30]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

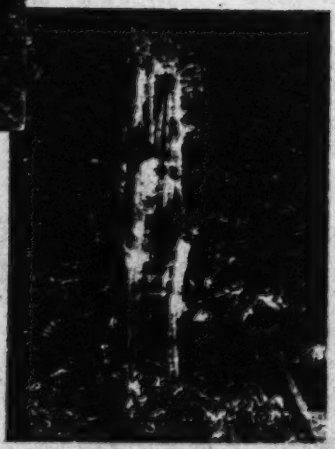
136

Tree fern.

133



Hillside in Sikkim.



Waterfall in the Talung.

[facing p. 31]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little 136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the 346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the [77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to 792 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain
726 quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms,
727 and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

scarf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
good horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
of your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well also. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied behind them, and they should be made to walk. Officers should be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken harness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and obliged to fly, they should not be reprimanded, but they should not be rewarded or receive any presents, even though the leader be a great man. The prisoners should receive what is necessary for subsistence, and also expenses for religious ceremonies, and men of rank should be treated well and with consideration.

"A man can only make a treaty for himself and his own descendants."

Concerning murder.

"The price for killing a gentleman who has 300 servants, 671
or a superintendent of a district, or a lama professor, is 300 682
to 400 gold srang. For full lamas, Government officers, and 554
gentlemen with 100 servants the fine is 200 oz. of gold.

"For killing gentlemen who possess a horse and five or six servants, or working lamas the fine is 145 to 150 oz. of gold.

"For killing men with no rank, old lamas, or personal servants the fine is 80 oz. of gold.

"For killing common people and for villagers the price is 30 to 40 oz. of gold.

"For killing a man who has done good work for Government the fine is 50 to 70 oz. of gold.

"For killing unmarried men, servants, and butchers the price is 30 gold srang; and for killing blacksmiths and beggars, 10 to 20 oz. of gold.

"On the price being paid a letter must be written and a 671
copy given to each party saying that everything has been 682
settled. If a case is reopened a fine must be paid by him who opens the case. The murderer must write to the effect

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

671 that he will not commit such a crime again. Part of the fine
682 can be given towards the funeral expenses of the deceased."

Ordeal by oil.

671 "The oil must be supplied by the Government and must
695 be of the finest quality. It is boiled in a pan at least three inches deep. In the oil a black stone and a white stone are placed, of equal size and weight. He who has taken the oath must first wash his hands in water, in milk, and in widow's urine. His hand is then bound in a cloth and sealed. This is done a day or two before the ordeal, in order to give him a chance of confessing. The vessel with the boiling oil is then placed so that the stones cannot be seen, and he has to take one out. If he takes out the white one without any burn he wins his case. He who gets the black stone is sure to be burnt, and loses his case. Should he who gets the white stone be slightly burnt, it means that he has partially spoken the truth, and wins half his case."

Concerning adultery.

671 "For violating a woman of different position 3 oz. of gold
684 have to be paid to the woman's relations, and 4 gold srang to Government, besides many things in kind.

"For violation of a woman of the same position as the man 2 or 3 gold srang and several articles in kind must be paid.

"If the woman goes of her own accord to the man he has only to pay 1 gold srang and three kinds of articles.

"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard, and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

437 They have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

157 "A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bare-headed and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

000 "What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particularly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and compassion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and nomenclature extend to beasts, birds, to insects, and to everything around them, animate and inanimate. The trees and the flowers, and the birds, and the insects have heretofore been their friends and companions. But now, this simple knowledge, this beautiful language, this once happy people are fast dying out. The Lepchas have left their woods and innocence and have fallen into sin and misery, and is there no one that will help them, no one that will save them?"

MAINWARING. 1876.

But the forest is still there: the good Colonel forgot the effects of that 137 inches of rain a year!

The Secretary of State for India, when Governor of Bengal, visits the Lepchas.

"We were entering a country reserved for the Lepchas, a stumpy, flat-faced people with sallow complexions and matted black hair, just such gnomes as one would look for in the sombre depths of an enchanted forest. And their impersonation of the part was perfect when, as not infrequently happened, they emerged unexpectedly from the forest armed with bows and arrows. And as if this was not enough, the attendants thoughtfully detailed by His Highness the Maharaja to accompany us, were garbed in a manner one would look for in no one but a woodland elf."

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY
(now Marquess of Zetland), 1923.

A modern opinion by one who has worked among the Lepchas for fifty years.

"You ask me what I think of the Lepchas as compared with the other hill peoples—the Tibetans and the Nepalese. As I have told you, they appeal to me more than do the others. I'll give you a few instances of individuals and groups. I am, of course, conscious that one is apt to be prejudiced in favour of people we personally like, and to forget that among all races there are outstanding individuals who are exceptions to the general rule; but I'll do my best to be judicious.

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"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have 157
had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant
we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every
characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was
with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the
plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi
is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have
never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was
not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from
him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have
entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything
for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have
known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it
was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have,
of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been
treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our
district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe
that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors.
On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who
have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more
numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink [733]
has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young
Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had
promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous 241
and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The 574
fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the 735
Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary
made them interdependent. They were not good farmers
and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their
dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free
by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of
sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came
to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop
an interest in social questions. One night the subject was
debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said
that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

given in sacrifice; and, in addition, a promise given that when they are in a position to keep the pledge they will give the required animals to the spirits. No one will dare to break the pledge until he is freed from this wasteful superstition."

Personal communication from the Very Rev. Dr. J. A. GRAHAM, C.I.E., D.D. 1937.

Missionary influence: a letter from a Christian Lepcha girl thanking a friend for a present.

"Kalimpong,
"10/9/37.

"DEAR MISTER SAHIB,—

"Many many thanks for your affectionate parcel, which I received yesterday through a Chaprasi. By testing that parcel of an egg, I nearly fainted down, but I myself illustretted [*sic*] my heart. I hope you will be my ever provider. I hope for four dozen eggs of such kinds.

"Please excuse me for my mistake.

"Cheery You!

"Your ever helpless,

"J. M. Lepchani.

"P.S.—If you will not give the reply of this letter then and there I shall seldom write you again."

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CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 197] few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 197 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

introduced into the country about the middle of the seventeenth century by Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo, the patron saint of Sikkim.

Lha-Tsun is so intimately connected with the local form of Lamaism, figures so frequently in the strange hotch-potch of fact and fiction that passes for history, that it is essential to give some details of his life, so far as they are known.

Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo is a Tibetan title meaning "The great reverend god." His ordinary religious name is Kun-zan num-gye, or "The entirely victorious essence of goodness"; but he is also known by the title of Lha-tsun num kha Jig-may, or "the reverend god who fears not the sky." This is with reference to his alleged power of flying. He has yet another name, being sometimes referred to as Kusho Dsog-ch'en Ch'em-bo, or "The great and honourable Dsog-ch'en," the latter part of which name means literally "The great end," this being the technical name for the particular system of mysticism practised by the Nin-ma-pa sect, of which he was a member. Kusho means merely "the honourable," and is the title by which all persons of position are addressed in Tibet.

He was born in the fire-bird year of the tenth of the sixty-year cycles, corresponding to A.D. 1595, in the district of Kongbu, in south-eastern Tibet. Having spent many years in various monasteries and in travelling through Tibet and Sikkim, he eventually arrived in Lhasa in 1648, where he obtained such repute by his learning that he attracted the favourable notice of one Nag-wan, the greatest of the Grand Lamas, who shortly afterwards became the first of the so-called Dalai Lamas. Indeed, it is said that it was mainly through the special instructions given by Lha-tsun to the Grand Lama that the latter was so favourably treated by the Emperor of China and confirmed in the temporal rule of Tibet.

The detailed account of the saint's meeting with Nag-wan is worth citing as an example of the curious blend of the crude and the marvellous, of which most of these indigenous narratives are composed.

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175 In the year previous to that in which the fifth Grand Lama went to China, probably about A.D. 1649, the Grand Lama told his attendants that he had dreamt a sage would visit him that day. Should he do so he was at once to be admitted to the presence. Lha-tsun, arriving at the site now named Pargo-K'alin, immediately below the Potala, the Dalai Lama's palace, blew loudly a *kalin*, or trumpet made from a human thigh-bone; but the castle guard, in ignorance of Lha-tsun's identity, seized him and tied him to the Do-ring monolith as a punishment for daring to trumpet so close to the palace. The saint, however, soon caused the whole hill of Potala to shake, and by this means his arrival was brought to the notice of the Grand Lama, who ordered his instant release and admission.

On coming into the presence of the Grand Lama he walked boldly up and struck the latter with his fist and then vomited before him, much to the astonishment and disgust of the attendant courtiers. The saint then explained his action: "You are shortly going to China," he said; "and on the way a great danger awaits you, but my striking you has rid you of that danger. In China you will find yourself in great peril some day. When that happens consult this paper which I now give you, and you will be relieved. My vomiting in your presence means that you will ultimately be invested with great power and riches through my good offices."

The dilemma prophesied at this time turned out to be a query posed by the Emperor of China regarding the "essence of the rainbow colour," which quite confounded the Grand Lama. But he suddenly remembered the episode with the saint, consulted the paper, and found that it contained the required information. He so astonished the Emperor by the sagacity of his reply that he loaded him with honours and riches. The Grand Lama, on his return from China, offered Lha-tsun much treasure as a reward for the services he had rendered: this, however, the saint refused.

Previous to his visit to Lhasa it is said that the saint,

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ccompanied by a few disciples, journeyed to the south-west 175
f Tibet, saying: "According to the prophecy of Guru
Rimpoche I must go and open the northern gate of the
hidden country of the rice-valleys,' De-mo-jong, meaning
Sikkim; and I must develop that country religiously." He
hen proceeded by way of Shigatse and Sakya to Zar, a
hort distance to the north of Tashi-rab-ka near the Nepal
rontier, where he founded a monastery.

He next attempted to enter Sikkim by way of Jongri, but
ould find no path, and remained for many days in a cave,
he name of which means "the very pleasant grove," near
Kan-la nan-ma. There "the everlasting summit of the five
epositories of snow," the mountain god Konchen, trans-
ormed himself into a wild goose and conversed with the
age; and here, according to the prophecy of Guru Rimpoche,
e composed the book named "The Complete Book of
Vorship and Offerings for Kinchinjunga."

At this time another Lama, of the Kar-tok-pa sub-sect,
ame searching for a path into Sikkim. He tried, without
uccess, the so-called "Monkey-back rock" (with reference
o its semblance to a monkey sitting with its hands behind
s back), and then the road from Jongri; but having reached
he cave of "the very pleasant grove" he fell in with the
aint, who told him that since he was not destined to open
the northern gate" he should go round and try the western
ntrance.

Lha-tsun then flew miraculously to the upper part of
Mount Kabru, where once again he blew his *kalin:* and after
n interval of two weeks he flew down to where his servants
vere collected and guided them to Norbu-gang in Sikkim.

Soon after this there arrived two other *Nin-ma* Lamas.
By way of "the western gate" of Singalila came the Kar-
ok-pa Lama already mentioned, whose name was "The
Great Soul," and a Lama of the Na-dak-pa sect named
"The Great Sage," who had opened "the southern gate" by
vay of Darjeeling and Namchi. The place where these three
Lamas met was afterwards called by the Lepchas Yok-sam,

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175 which means "(the place of) the three superior ones."

The three Lamas now held council together, at which Lha-tsun said: "We three Lamas have reached a new and irreligious country. We must have a 'dispenser of gifts,' a king, to rule the country on our behalf." To this the Na-dak-pa Lama replied: "I am descended from the celebrated Terton Na-dak Nan-rel, who was himself a king; I should therefore be the king here." But the Kar-tok-pa Lama would have none of this. "Since I too am of royal lineage I have the right to rule," he said. But to this Lha-tsun now replied: "I should tell you that according to the prophecy of the Guru Rimpoche it is written that four noble brothers shall meet in Sikkim and there arrange for its government. We are three of these, having come respectively from the north, west, and south. Towards the east, so it is written, there is at this time a man named Pun-tsok, a descendant of the brave people of Kham, a province of Eastern Tibet; and according to the prophecy of the Master we should invite him to join us."

Two messengers were then dispatched to search for this Pun-tsok. Going towards the east of Sikkim they arrived at Gangtok, where they saw a man churning milk and asked him his name. He did not reply, but invited them to sit down, after which he gave them milk to drink. After they were somewhat refreshed the man said that his name was Pun-tsok. He was then conducted to the Lamas, who crowned him by placing the holy water-vase upon his head and anointed him with the water. They exhorted him to rule the country religiously and gave him Lha-tsun's own surname of Num-gye, with the additional title of "The great religious king."

Pun-tsok was at this time aged thirty-eight and he became a Lama in the same year. This was about A.D. 1641.

Lha-tsun spent the greater part of the rest of his life in Sikkim, exploring its caves and mountain recesses, composing its Lamaist legends, and fixing sites for temples and monastories. He first built a hut at Dub-de, which afterwards

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became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons. These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

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778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
[212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

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compiled from Tibetan and Chinese sources, the only ones available at the time it was written; and for this reason it places the Gurkhas in a somewhat unfavourable light. There is no doubt, however, that the Gurkhas were in the wrong: they had overrun Sikkim and even looted Shigatse, which, by reason of its being the home of the Tashi Lama, is one of the most venerated places in all Tibet. There is little doubt that the Chinese army actually entered Nepalese territory; but that they dictated terms within sight of the capital is not so sure. According to the Nepalese version of the story the Chinese were greatly impressed with the valour of the Gurkhas, and their General retired amicably after arranging for the despatch of a quinquennial trade mission to Pekin. The arrangement was faithfully kept and a mission went from Nepal to China once every five years. With the fall of the central government, however, the arrangement lapsed and has since been discontinued; but the relations between the two countries have remained friendly.

"On the breaking out of the Nepal War in 1814, Major Latter at the head of a British force occupied the Morang, and formed an alliance with the Raja of Sikkim, who gladly seized the opportunity of revenging himself on the Gurkhas. At the close of the war in 1816, the Raja was rewarded by a considerable accession of territory, which has been ceded to the British by Nepal. In February, 1835, the Raja granted the site of Darjeeling to the British, and received a pension of Rs. 3,000 per annum in lieu of it."

This last seems to have been an astute piece of business on somebody's part; a pension of little more than two hundred pounds a year in return for a grant of land which is now the richest tea-producing area in the whole of India.

"There was, however, a standing cause of quarrel between the Raja and the paramount power, due to the prevalence of slavery in Sikkim; the Raja's subjects were inveterate kidnappers, and the Raja himself was most anxious to obtain from the British authorities the restoration of runaway slaves. With some notion of enforcing the latter demand,

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175 Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, and Dr. Hooker, the famous naturalist, were seized in 1849 whilst travelling in Sikkim, and detained for six weeks. As a punishment for this outrage the Raja's pension was stopped, and a piece of territory, including the lower course of the Tista and the Sikkim tarai, was annexed. The practice of kidnapping Bengali subjects of the British Crown was, however, not discontinued; and two especially gross cases in 1860 led to an order that the Sikkim territory, north of the Ramman river and west of the Rangit, should be occupied until restitution was made. Colonel Gawler, at the head of a British force, with the Hon. Ashley Eden as envoy, advanced into Sikkim and proceeded to Tumlong, when the Raja was forced to make full restitution, and to sign a treaty (in March, 1861) which secured the rights of free trade, of protection for travellers, and of road-making. For many years the State was left to manage its own affairs; but for some time prior to 1888 the Tibetans were found to be intriguing with the Maharaja, who became more and more unfriendly. Affairs reached a climax in 1888, when war broke out with the Tibetans, who took up a position eleven miles within Sikkim territory. British troops were sent against them, and they were driven off with ease. In 1889 a political officer subordinate to the Commissioner of the Rajshai Division was stationed at Gangtok (now the capital of Sikkim) to advise and assist the Maharaja and his council; and this was followed in 1890 by the execution of a convention with the Chinese, by which the British protectorate over Sikkim and its exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of the State were recognised. Since the Tibetan expedition (the so-called Younghusband 'Mission') of 1904, the Political officer has been directly responsible to the Government of India.

"After the appointment of the Political officer in 1889 communications were greatly improved by the construction of roads and bridges, and the settlement of Nepalese was permitted in certain parts of the State. These measures were

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followed by the rapid development of the country. Settlers /75
from Nepal flocked in, and the population, which in 1891 was returned at 30,458, had grown to 59,014 ten years later; an increase of 93.7 per cent."

The story of the Nepalese invasion is still known by most of /73
the older people. This is the version told me by the Mandal of Lingtem, who was given it by his father:

In olden days the Maharaja of Sikkim lived in Fyung Di. One day his chief minister, who was also a famous Lama, said to him: "Your Highness; war is undoubtedly coming before long, so let us get away with our possessions while there is still time." To this, however, the King replied: "What do you, a mere Tibetan, know of war or other affairs of state? Even if war does come, cannot I and my seven sons defeat with ease any paltry Gurkha army that may come to attack us?" But the minister, whose name was Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo,* was not convinced, and taking leave of the King he gathered together his considerable possessions and set off towards the Chumbi Valley. Shortly after his departure news arrived that the Gurkha army was approaching the capital; and even before it reached Fyung Di it had already inflicted several defeats on the peace-loving Lepchas. The Queen and her sons implored the King to flee; but he was adamant and remained alone on guard. He stood with his shield in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and threatened to cut down anyone who dared to approach him. But his six grown-up sons were more prudent, and decided to set off on their own. The Queen remained behind with her husband, and it was only when the invading army had already reached the outskirts of the town that the King at last acceded to his wife's entreaties. They hurried off just as they were; the palace was left open and nothing was even

* Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo must have been dead for nearly two hundred years when the Nepal war took place; but, as I have already noted, Sikkim history is a mixture of fact and fiction, and the Lepcha likes to associate the patron saint of his country with every important happening. He will be found to figure in nearly every story of this sort; if not in person, then in a reincarnated form.

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173 locked up. After the two of them had gone a mile or so from the palace, the Queen suddenly remembered that she had left her youngest son, a baby in arms, behind. She went back alone, snatched up the child, and was preparing to leave when she suddenly heard a crash behind her. She turned round to see what had happened and at once noticed that the mask of Lord Konchen had fallen to the ground. She picked it up, put it in her bosom with the baby and hurried away, rejoining the King shortly after. It is for this reason that Konchen is now worshipped by the Maharaja of Sikkim as a very special deity.

After a long and weary march the King and Queen came to Kabi, a small village in the vicinity of the Penlong La. In the meanwhile the Gurkhas had taken possession of Fyung Di and had plundered the palace, stealing even the gold and silver sacred images, of which there were many. There were also copies of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. These were unlike ordinary books in that they were printed entirely in letters of the purest gold. The Gurkhas took all these books outside, piled them on a large flat stone, and set fire to them. When the embers had died down the gold was collected and from each volume a lump the size of a hen's egg was obtained. All this loot the Gurkhas sent off to Mikrum Di, which was the principal palace in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. All the Lepchas were very frightened of the conquering Gurkhas, especially when they saw the palace stripped of all its treasures. They saw that there was nothing they could do to stem the tide, and so they moved off into the hills, into the most remote corners and valleys they could find. They took with them their cattle and as much of the property as they could carry, hoping that the Gurkhas would never discover their hiding places. Most of them went to the headwaters of the Rangnyit river.

Now the King did not know what to do, as although the Gurkhas seemed to have retired for the moment, so also had his own people, and a great part of the country in consequence became entirely empty. Eventually he decided to take his wife

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and children with him and to ask the King of Tibet for refuge; 173 for although his Queen was a Lepcha, the King himself was a pure Tibetan. Later on the Gurkhas returned and swarmed once more all over Sikkim. Because of this the Lepchas were driven into still more remote places. Some of these were so inaccessible that the people had to live entirely on the produce of the jungle, eating even ferns. The Gurkhas had brought with them a huge mill made of lead, from which they cut off bits to make ammunition for their weapons. They carried this mill as far as Rungjyol (a place in the Talung Valley, on the other side of the river from Lingtem), but it was too much of a burden for them to carry it further. Its remains were still in existence until a few generations ago, but it has now all been used up by the local people. The Gurkhas advanced as far as Sakyong Pantung, where they buried their swords and shields to mark what was now the boundary of their country.

The Lepchas now began to leave their hiding places and they all collected together in order to decide on a plan of campaign. It was arranged to send a deputation to the Maharaja, who was still in Tibet, and to ask him what they should do. The King, however, was unable to give them an answer and told them to do whatever they thought best. After this the Lepchas gathered above Sakyong Pantung; and by degrees drove the Gurkhas back by stoning them. They could make no reply, since they had buried all their arms. The Gurkhas were gradually pushed lower and lower down the valley until eventually they reached the junction of the two rivers. Here the confusion was so great that the river became choked with bodies and a lake formed above the dam of corpses: but still a few desperate Gurkhas managed to hold on to the position. That night all the Lepchas went up on to the surrounding hills, where they set light to the bamboo forest, which burnt with a popping noise. This terrified the Gurkhas, who thought the noise was that of fire-arms being discharged. At the same time the Lepchas prepared stakes of pointed cane, lighted them and discharged them from their

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173 bows. The Gurkhas were by now thoroughly terrified and their remnants retired in disorder. The Maharaja was thereupon summoned from Tibet and as soon as he arrived the country was finally cleared of the marauding Gurkhas, and the boundary fixed. It ran along the line Niu-oong-Munshi-oong-Du-Du Kosi (presumably the Dudh Kosi) and Tambar Kosi. For a long time the Maharaja used to collect taxes in this area, but no longer does so, as it is now part of Nepal. After settling the boundary, the Maharaja returned to Fyung Di, but he found only the walls of his place still standing. He summoned many Lamas and asked them to call the Lord Konchen, to whom a bullock was first sacrificed. At the same time all the other gods were also summoned. Konchen was told that since his was the greatest influence in Sikkim he must help in getting revenge upon the Gurkhas, who had wrought such terrible destruction all over the country. He agreed to help and said he would send devils to destroy Nepal. One year later the Mikrum Di, in which all the stolen treasure was stored, was engulfed in a rising lake. All the occupants of the palace, including the then King of Nepal, were drowned, but it is said that the palace is still visible beneath the water. Ever since that day half the wealth of Sikkim has remained buried in the lake and the other half is stored in Tulung Monastery, where it was put by Lha-Tsun-Ch'em-Bo. It cannot be touched because Lha-Tsun left it in the charge of certain devils who would immediately take their revenge if anyone tried to touch it. It is for this reason that the Maharaja can make no use of it. No one has ever seen the treasure, but the boxes in which it is stored are still visible in Talung. It is said that the people of Nepal are still very afraid of the Lepchas, but actually, so said the Mandal: "the only thing Lepchas are any good at nowadays is carrying other people's loads!"

175 The settlement of Gurkhas in Sikkim is no new thing, and I imagine there must have been a number already there even before the war with Nepal. Their coming has not been altogether a bad thing, for neither the Lepcha, still less the

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Tibetan, is at heart an agriculturist. Left to himself the 175
Lepcha is but a poor cultivator, and he had need of the Gurkhas to show him how to make the best use of his land. The Gurkha needed land, the Lepcha instruction; but probably no one realised how this give and take would end. However it was, a line has now been fixed beyond which Gurkhas may not acquire land; and none but Lepchas may settle in Jongu. But to continue the Mandal's story:

Many, many years ago, in the time of Raja Pun-tsok, there 173
was a man named Laso Kaji, who thought he would like to possess the district of Jongu, which is one of the most fertile parts of Sikkim. He went to the Raja and told him of his desire, saying that the land he wanted was only a tiny piece, stony and unfertile. Since the Raja had not himself travelled, and indeed did not even know the names of his villages, he readily consented, at which Laso departed happy. Now the Raja had a favourite minister whose name was Yuk Ting Takshay, and this man he trusted greatly. He badly wanted some special poison plants, called *Sumdo* and *Vim-pot*, which were to be found only high up in the mountains, and which had the peculiar quality at night of shining like bright flames. They were extremely rare, and their possession brought with it the acquisition of every kind of riches. Yuk Ting Takshay set off on his quest, taking with him vast quantities of gold and silver, many copper vessels, a huge leaden mill, ivory, and a large assortment of such musical instruments as are used in monasteries. There was also much rich clothing, of the sort worn only by rajas and other great men. All these things he brought from Fyung Di, where the capital was in those days.

In the course of his travels Yuk Ting Takshay came to a place called Navar Hlo, which he reached just as night was falling. This place was the home of many devils, who refused to let him continue. But when they saw all the beautiful treasure he had brought they agreed to let him pass provided he left it behind. This he did; and in return the devils turned night into day, so that the minister need not

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173 delay. All this treasure, which was meant as an offering to the gods, is said to be still concealed in a cave above the Talung: and as for the lead, it is still there, but has much decreased since the local people, in the course of generations, have been gradually whittling it away. The next day Yuk Ting Takshay got to a place called Toong Voong, and, arrived there, he asked to whom it belonged. "It is the property of Laso Kaji," they told him: and as he proceeded on his way he received always the same answer. At this time Laso Kaji himself was living in a house on the site of Jiroong's present home, and when Yuk Ting Takshay came to it he turned him out, whereupon he fled over the hills to Parfok, where he lived the whole of the following year, unbeknown to the authorities. Meanwhile Yuk Ting Takshay went on with his search and in due course returned to Fyung Di, when he told the Raja what he had seen. He told him how he had been deceived by Laso Kaji, to whom, unknowingly, he had ceded an immense track of land. When he had considered the story the Raja decided to send Yuk Ting Takshay back again in order to take possession of the land. Now below Mangen, near the present bridge, there is a hot spring called Rong Rong Tcha Chu, and it was here that Yuk Ting Takshay decided to camp. He had with him many servants, and these soon got into the way of going across the river to steal manioc and other plants. When the people on the far side of the river heard of this they went and complained to Laso Kaji, who was still living in Parfok, and whom they regarded as their ruler. He asked who these thieves were, but they could not tell him. He told them, however, to send twelve men across in the dead of night in order to kill as many of the thieves as they could. Before they could put their plan into action Yuk Ting Takshay's men got wind of their approach and started to run away, so that when they reached the camp they found only Yuk Ting Takshay. He was sitting alone in the hot spring, enjoying its warmth, and at the same time shouting to his men to come back and help him. Yuk Ting Takshay asked the men who

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they were, and they told him they had been sent by Laso 173
Kaji with orders to kill both him and his men. Yuk Ting Takshay was very angry, and single-handed though he was, he managed to disarm all of Laso's men. Later on, when the row had somewhat subsided, Yuk Ting Takshay's followers returned, and the next morning he sent them across the river to find out what Laso Kaji meant. Laso was somewhat perplexed, as he had no idea of whom he had attacked. He decided to slaughter a bullock and sent it across as something in the nature of a peace offering. At the same time he sent word apologising for what he had done, and particularly asked Yuk Ting Takshay not to let the Raja know what had happened, for he feared for his life. Yuk Ting Takshay accepted the carcass and agreed to do what was asked of him, but at the same time he ordered Laso Kaji to leave the district, which he did. He went off no one knows where, but his descendants are now living in Namchi. From that day Jongu was taken over by the Raja and has formed part of the private estate ever since.

Laso Kaji's descendants seem to have kept up the family 175
tradition of lawlessness, for in 1861 we find the then holder of the title opposing a British force.

Writing on the 20th February from Rungpodon, on the banks of the Teesta, Colonel Gawler describes his meeting with him:

"I considered it expedient that our point for crossing the Teesta should be within, at most, three days' march of Tumloong (to obviate our being obliged to form any large depots on the other side of the river); but, as this would necessitate a march for some distance up the right bank from Temi, I determined on cutting all bridges below the point I might select, so that neither my force nor convoys might be liable to annoyance during what would be a flank march.

"I therefore started the next morning, an hour before daylight, to search for bridges, and about nine o'clock found a large one at the Linsing Ghat, a few miles above the Took Ghat. On approaching it I was met by three natives bearing

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175a flag of truce and two letters, which were immediately forwarded to Mr. Eden, the Special Commissioner.

"The natives informed me that Lassoo Kajee was on the other side (of the Teesta) and wished to come across.

"As I knew that Mr. Eden wished every facility to be afforded to natives to come in and return to their villages, and had heard Lassoo Kajee's name mentioned particularly, I said that he might come, and concealed my men in the jungles along the bank, near the bridge. There were several hours' delay while he was getting (as they informed us) his baggage ready, and during this time we observed that the stockades opposite were full of men, armed with matchlocks and rifles: I also observed one or two jingalls.[1] Across the river was about a stone's throw, and the opposite jungle was thick with faces peeping at us. There was a strongly marked difference between these curious ones and those who manned the stockades. The tall figures, features, attitudes, and demeanours of the latter were totally unlike the effeminate Lepcha, or even the Bhooteas whom I had hitherto seen. I was informed that they were Tibetans, the guard of the Sikkim Raja, who had sent a detachment of them to every bridge.

"As Mr. Eden had told me that he did not wish me to stop operations for anything, I informed Lassoo Kajee when he arrived that I had come to cut the bridge. He replied that he had given orders that no one should cross while he was negotiating, but I told him that I could not spare a picket to see that his orders were not disobeyed, nor did I want to have to make a second trip, and that if he wished to recross at the point he could do so on a raft. (Rafts do not take long in making, but require five men, at least, on each side, to work them, and will only take from fifteen to twenty men at a time. A party crossing to annoy us would not be satisfied with a raft as a means of retreat. By a hot pursuit they might all be caught, for the men would not stop to work the raft.)

"Lassoo Kajee at length said that his own men should destroy the stockades and the bridge, and after some more time spent in parleying, and the guards removing

[1] [A large musket or crude cannon, fired from a swivel - Analyst]

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their baggage and marching out, this was effected.* 175

"We then left, and Lassoo Kajee accompanied us and asked us to send an escort with him to Mr. Eden at Temi, for he was on his way there on the previous evening, and hearing firing ran down again, and falling on the rocks hurt his leg severely. Ascending the ridge towards our camp we saw Mr. Eden and Cheboo Lama coming down the ridge behind us from Temi, he having understood that I was encamped on the river bank. I returned to him with Lassoo Kajee, and we then went to the river bank and talked with some of the people on the opposite side, and it was arranged that those who wished might cross on rafts. Mr. Eden then returned to Temi and I to my camp."

To the above account it is only necessary to add that 648 friendly relations have continued with Sikkim ever since, and that the country, although completely independent, is now the chief refuge of tired Calcutta residents in search of health. Mountaineers, mostly from Europe, are also visiting the country in ever-increasing numbers; and hardly a year now passes without some hitherto virgin peak being climbed. Kinchinjunga, however, has so far resisted every assault, and it seems likely that many years will pass before man is able to overcome its most formidable defences.

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* "On leaving Namchi, the force was divided into three parties, the main column, under Captain Impey, proceeding direct towards the Teesta, and two parties, under Colonel Gawler and Captain Urwin respectively, making long detours to the left and right, with the view of all reuniting again at the Teesta. Captain Impey's column surprised the Sikkimese camp at Temi; they fled, leaving their clothes and weapons, and were pursued down within a few miles of the Teesta. From that time no further attempt at opposition was made; the people were perfectly paralysed at the rapid movements of the troops, whom they perceived to be advancing in several directions at once, by forced marches, through dense forests, and over pathless mountains, traversing in one day distances which even the natives of these hills considered to be three fair marches."—*Extract from Mr. Eden's final report, No. 40, April 8th*, 1861.

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PART TWO

THE PEOPLE

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CHAPTER 4

Origin of the Lepchas and Village Administration

773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

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773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

* * * * *

614 The Lepcha tribe is composed of a number of clans, called
619 *pu-tso*. No one can say how many clans there are, for this grouping seems to be a purely local one. In the Kalimpong district I recorded the names of over forty different clans, but in Lingtem there were but fourteen, all of them different from those I had already collected. There does not appear ever to have been any sort of tribal organisation, nor even a tribal leader; and while I use the word clan to denote these collections of people, it would be better to regard them as merely belonging to one large family, which is in fact what
614 they are. We shall probably never know what functions the clan formerly possessed, but its sole use nowadays is in regulating marriage, it being impossible for a man to marry a girl of the same *pu-tso* as his own. Ethnologists call this custom exogamy: but Lepcha exogamy is of a special kind, for it does permit a man to marry a relative of his father provided the relationship is removed by five (but some say seven) generations. Such a marriage is of course only possible with a person descended through the father's sister, since she, having married into another clan, belongs to a different *pu-tso*. In the case of a marriage between the descendants of two sisters a separation of only three generations is demanded. In actual practice all this means is that any two related people, provided they do not both belong to the same clan, may marry provided the relationship between them is sufficiently distant as to have been forgotten for all practical purposes.

Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

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Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which 614
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [651]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

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636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, 692 but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

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would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business. 000

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as 624 *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is 693 eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays 651 five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one 655 rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent [17] innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

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651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
[857] and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

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CHAPTER 5

Lamaism: Monks and Nuns

TO the ignorant Lepcha the world is peopled by 776
spirits; evil spirits known as *Mung*, and good spirits known as *Rum*, or gods. It is difficult sometimes to decide whether a particular spirit is devil or god; for while a Mung is always evil, a Rum, if angered, will appear in a malicious guise and may then be referred to as a demon. Every happening in the material world is due to the influence of spirits. Devils cause sickness, bad harvests, and every other kind of misfortune: but provided they are appeased by means of the correct sacrifices their evil can be averted, and on occasions they may even be induced to further some particular project, such as causing the death of an enemy, or winning the heart of some apparently stony-hearted woman. Some earlier writers have described the Lepchas as animists, but I believe this idea to be mistaken. Animism implies the attribution of a living soul to inanimate 774
objects and natural phenomena; but the Lepcha has not this belief. According to his ideas, trees, rivers, rocks and other natural objects are only the homes of spirits; but as such they must be treated with proper respect. The objects themselves, however, while they are sometimes thought to possess a separate soul, do not need to be propitiated. When a house, 774
for instance, is being built, a sacrifice will be made when the 782
trees are felled from which it is to be constructed. This sacrifice, however, is offered not to the spirits considered to be inherent in the trees themselves, but to compensate for any annoyance which might be caused to spirits living in them, and also as a general expiation for the sin of taking life; for trees, being living things, are thought to have separate souls of their own. This last is only a minor

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774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[538] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

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unreformed sects. These are the so-called "red hat" Lamas, 795 as opposed to the reformed "yellow-hat" or *Ge-lug-pa*, which form the established Church of Tibet proper. The Nin-ma-pa is more freely tinged than any other with pre-Buddhist practices and its Lamas are required neither to remain celibate nor to practise abstinence. "It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha. Its mystic insight is Mohautpanna or the "great ultimate perfection." Its tutelaries are "The fearful Vajra and Dub-pa-koh-gye." Its guardian demon is "The Lord *Gur*. It worships the Guru Padma-sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal, expressive of his different moods at different times, and also his favourite Kashmiri teacher, Sri Sinha, and the Indian teacher of the latter, Gah-rab-Dorje, who derived his inspiration from the celestial Buddha, Vajra-satwa, who in turn was inspired by the primordial deity, Samantabhadra-Buddha."

There are, of course, in Sikkim many learned Lamas who 793 would find no difficulty in expounding the canon of their 795 Church. The Abbot of Lachen, for instance, which is only a long day's march from Lingtem, is a man of quite remarkable intelligence and learning. Among others Mme. David-Neel, the famous French Tibetan scholar and traveller, has paid tribute to his exceptional ability as a teacher, as has my friend Marco Pallis, who also studied with him for a time. But men such as he are rareties in any community; and as for the Lamas in Lingtem I doubt if they could even name the sect to which they belong. But in Lingtem, and in fact all over the Jongu district, the Church is nothing more than a spare-time occupation. There are about eighteen Lamas attached to the Lingtem Monastery and all of these are engaged in the normal occupation of an ordinary Lepcha villager. They attend at the monastery for periodical ceremonies, usually twice each month, but their chief function consists in conducting private services in connection with illness, crops, house-building, and so on, for

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individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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Lingtem Monastery.

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Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *tormas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Guru Rimpoche.

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Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

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793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[43] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

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793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

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young Lama not already know how to play these instruments he is particularly enjoined to practise assiduously; and I can personally testify that he does so!

The next stage is known as *Ka-Ne*, and to attain this a feast similar to the last must again be given. A Ka-Ne also plays on musical instruments and in addition he is permitted to offer lamps to the monastery idols, and to change the ceremonial bowls of water every morning and evening. He also assists in making the ceremonial cones of dough known as *Tormo;* but still he takes no part in the reading of books. To attain the next rank, known as *Che-ne*, a much bigger feast is necessary. This time an ox, sufficient millet to make forty maunds of Chi, and three maunds of rice are necessary. The initiation ceremony, which seems to consist mostly in eating and drinking, lasts for three days and nights. The Lama will himself usually attempt to cultivate the necessary millet from which the *Chi* is made, but in view of the enormous quantity necessary the whole village will generally lend a hand in providing it. Most of the village is present during the ceremony; and in addition to the food and drink provided by the Lama himself each household provides eight pounds of parched rice and a certain amount of *Chi*. During the festivities the newly appointed Che-Ne will prepare the ceremonial altar, together with its concomitant *Tormas*. He is now qualified to take part in all ceremonies, but as Che-Ne his special duties are to be responsible for the ritually correct performance of all monastic services. His function is somewhat similar to that of the Esquire Bedells at Cambridge. He may now perform ceremonies outside the monastery for private individuals, and if of sufficient age may even be entrusted with the teaching of young novices.

The next stage, known as *Chōtembu*, requires another big feast, but the festivities for this last for one day only. In addition to the food and drink the newly promoted Lama is also required to provide ten pounds either of oil or butter for burning in the ceremonial lamps. There is only one Chōtembu in each monastery, and he is in charge of all disciplinary

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[293] matters. He is permitted to beat other Lamas, and also laymen who are slack in the performance of their duties, not excluding even the Dorje-Lopön, or head of the monastery. It may be noted, however, that he has no authority to beat people once they have left the monastery or its grounds.

The next rank is known as *Umzet*. This, too, necessitates a big feast, which is generally attended by the whole village and lasts from two to three days. An Umzet teaches but has no authority to beat people. He is really under-study to the head of the monastery, and is usually not advanced to this rank unless it is considered that he is capable eventually of succeeding his master.

Dorje-Lopön is the highest rank of all, and there is usually one at the head of every monastery, though in Lingtem there are two. In addition to the usual feast each Lama and every householder in the village presents a woven scarf to the Dorje-Lopön. He is not required to keep all these scarves and generally sells them again at half their usual price. Thus, people who do not bring one with them to the ceremony may buy one from the Dorje-Lopön himself and re-present it, so that the offering really turns into a kind of cash transaction. There is no limit to the number of each rank of Lama in any particular monastery, and in practice the senior Dorje-Lopön, should there be more than one, is the titular head, the actual power being usually in the hands of some more active member of the community, more often than not the Umzet, as was the case in Lingtem. For the performance of actual [292] ceremonies most of the Lamas wear the usual maroon robe as worn by Lamas in Tibet. Unlike that country, however, there are here no differences in dress by which a Lama's rank may be recognised.

In addition to the Lamas there are also in Lingtem a number of nuns, or *Inebu*, as they are called. In Tibet, while female Lamas are given a very inferior position, scarcely higher than lay devotees, they are required to practise chastity, and usually live an ascetic life in remote and lonely convents. There is one such place at Tatsang, on the road to

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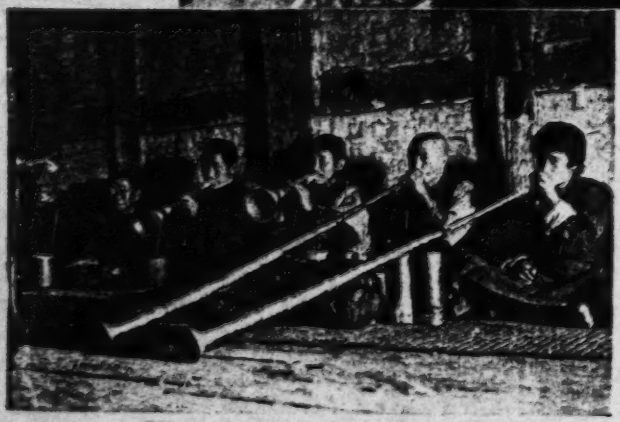
Lamaist music.

Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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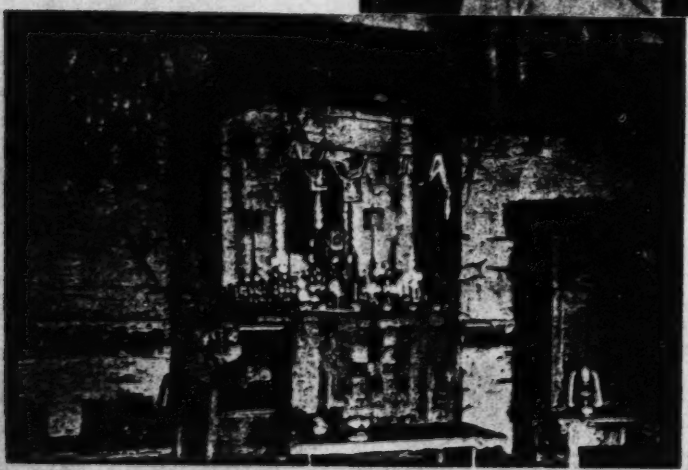

[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
[292] similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

[788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
293] twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 834 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 576 793 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait, which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

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When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 6

Some Lepcha Personalities

159 IT is time now to introduce some Lingtem personalities; and it will be convenient to start with the Church. The details of these brief biographies were not in every case contributed by the individual concerned; for, as with us, some Lepchas prefer to tell of others rather than to talk about themselves. I always felt apologetic when asking for these personal details. How many of us, I wonder, would care to impart the more intimate details of our private lives to a stranger, and one of an alien culture at that? In actual fact, however, most Lepchas have no reticence about such matters, and are not in the least offended if one refers to their illegitimate children, or asks for the names of the women with whom they are on intimate terms.

* * * * *

The senior Dorje-Lopön of Lingtem was a man of almost saintly appearance. Ascetic-looking and upright, you would have said that here was one who had long since cast off the cares of the flesh, but actually he could have given points to Casanova. When we first met him he was well over eighty years of age, but still spent most of the day helping in the fields. He first married when he was quite a young man, but tiring of his wife, by whom he had one son, he transferred his affections to a girl he liked better. He found the new wife so much to his liking, that, leaving his son in the care of the first, he forsook her and ran off to Darjeeling with the second. He came back one year later, and on his return his first wife's relatives attempted to bring about a reconciliation. This, 159 however, was unsuccessful, since the Dorje-Lopön had 586 completely tired of his first wife. All efforts having failed, she

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopōn was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopōn would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopōn might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopōn still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
[785] days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
[773] complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [1426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

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159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok;
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

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The second Dorje Lepdu.

The senior Dorje Lepdu.

[facing p. 84]

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Tafoor.

Chötembu.

[facing p. 85]

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159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head.
[582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction.
[585] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in
[587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill.
[861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

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and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [557
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

1 [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. – Analyst]

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159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in
[868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them.
[515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of
842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this
[828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she
[857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

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the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

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159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[588] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [291]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

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159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[937] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
425] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopōn is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopōn liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopōn has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159
teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754
thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776]
Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did
this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682
within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673]
own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma
Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his
wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her
house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753]
spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery:
hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black
and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a
very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage,
and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from
him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776]
people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot
help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she
dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then
be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this
old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's
father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was
believed that she always carried the poison on her person,
and for this reason he followed her to the fields and com-
pletely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was
shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor
says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the
same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly
hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take
his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the
story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father
searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really
does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old
woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

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159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[R1]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[Facing p. 96]

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173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

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159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep.
159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled
763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159
a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763
had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159
house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764
now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159
even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848]
was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

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the ground shredding a bamboo. He playfully kicked the 159
ball of twine which his father had just been making. This 861
made him very angry and he threw his knife at him; the scar of this he has to this day. He never loved his adopting parents. They used to beat him a lot on the back, and this always made him belch. Whenever he stole they tied his hands together with brushwood and held them over the fire. Although this never injured them it frightened him very much, and he decided to give up stealing.

Karma was now very unhappy. Although his adopting 159
parents were rich they gave him only a second-hand knife and some old and worn-out clothes. His mother, who was still very poor, had married again, and from time to time he used to go and see her. Whenever he did this he used always to take a little food, which he had saved out of the little that was given him. When he was about sixteen he decided to return to his own home. His mother asked him why he had come and told him to go back; but his stepfather remained silent. At that time Karma's two brothers and his eldest sister, who was already married, were living at home with their mother. While he was still feeling rather unsettled his elder brother said to him: "Why not stay at home and let us work the fields together; after all are we not real brothers?" Karma was fond of his elder brother, but did not care very much for his mother; but he decided to stay and help them work in the fields. After he had been at home about a month two men came from his adopting father's village. He was husking rice at the time. The two men came straight up to him and told him he must return with them; but this he refused to do. They then told him that his adopting father had bought a grindstone in a nearby village and that he wanted him to carry it home. A few days later he and his brother did take the grindstone over; but in order not to be seen they left it in an out-house and stole quietly away. Some weeks after this Karma's adopting father, whose name was Pashu, himself arrived. He had come over to attend a ceremony which the second Dorje-Lopön was performing

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159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopōn was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding
[593] life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

[837] After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's
[762] elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re-
[692] sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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replied that since the woman had herself come and implored him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible. A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies. When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain. These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more than this he would not say. The same evening, when they were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near. His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time, but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's

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159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

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Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [57]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

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159 of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is
531 the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an
531 artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at
159 Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of
874 its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he
[465] took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chôtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaviles*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
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415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

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Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[441
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[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

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159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
874 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

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159 531 874 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 792 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 622 775 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, [764] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

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instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been
decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will
not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who
lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being
offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented
to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When
we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen,
where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in
front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of
butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a
cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a
bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana
leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the
demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by
asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored
them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he
used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald
description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about
a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local
Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and
placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which
was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son.
This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a
substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending
these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we
were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most
welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy
chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is
not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

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159 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort
622 and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This I did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared into the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

* * * * *

602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show by means of charts, the connection between the various people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either by blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general account such as this, however, these details would not make for easy reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them for publication in some appropriate scientific journal.

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PART THREE

Magic and Spells

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CHAPTER 7

Exorcism and Other Magical Practices

754 IN the wild and mountainous forests of Sikkim "it is fitting," writes Mme. David-Neel, "that sorcery should hold sway. The so-called Buddhist population is practically Shamanist and a large number of mediums: Bönpos, Pawos, Bunting and Yabas of both sexes, even in the smallest hamlets, transmit the messages of gods, demons and the dead."

I have already made a number of scattered references to these people, and shall now try to disentangle the extremely muddled and conflicting Lepcha ideas concerning them.

756 In the first place, it seems clear that prior to the advent of Lamaism in Sikkim the only recourse the Lepchas had to their demons and gods was through the medium of *Mun* and *Padim*. According to the dictionary the former word means a "vagrant singing priest"; it can also be used to denote "an exorciser; or any experienced person." Padim, on the other hand, is given as "one unacquainted with religion and exorcism; or belonging to the laity"; but this meaning was not known in Lingtem. The difference between the two is not at all clear, nor are their powers strictly defined; but whereas both men and women may become Mun, it is impossible for a woman to be a Padim. The position seems to have some points in common with the Shamanism of Siberia; for whereas the Padim's god is male, that of the Mun is female. A Padim has power over certain demons only; but a Mun has power over all. From time to time a Mun becomes "possessed"; but a Padim never. A Padim receives no instruction in his duties; and such esoteric knowledge as he

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756 possesses is revealed to him in dreams. Although there were several Padim in Lingtem no one seemed to employ them, preferring always to call in a Mun. The difference between the two seems to be similar to that between a chemist, for instance, and a doctor, the Mun, of course, representing the latter.

756 There is, so far as I know, no ceremony which Mun
793 perform in Lingtem that in a more orthodox Lamaist society could not be performed equally well by Lamas: and while the latter have usurped many of the Mun's functions, at the present time the two work side by side in perfect amity, perhaps because of the equable Lepcha temperament. There is not the slightest rivalry between them, and when a Lama is called in to advise he will often recommend some ceremony for which a Mun is necessary.

756 A man does not become a Mun or Padim by inclination, but because of an irresistible compulsion manifested through some illness. Most of those with whom we talked, although they liked the presents that their patients brought them, would have preferred to be like ordinary men. There is only a certain number in every clan; and when one dies the talent passes on. Thus, although it is possible for a mother and son both to be Mun the talent is not hereditary; nor is it necessary for a man to be a Padim before becoming a Mun, although this sometimes happens.

Gongyop, the most popular Mun in Lingtem, became one only five years ago. He is at present forty-eight, and was a Padim for twenty years before he became a Mun. When he was in his early twenties he was taken very ill; and was weak and listless for a long time. The cause of his illness was eventually diagnosed, and it was seen that only by becoming a Padim could he recover his health. He could eat no rice, nor could he drink *chi;* and his limbs felt as though they had been tied up, and he could not walk. He remained in this state for nearly two years. However, as soon as the cause of his trouble was discovered he rapidly recovered. He became a Padim by the mere performance of the necessary ceremony;

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but later on a Mun appeared to him in a dream and told him what to do. Nowadays he always dreams before a ceremony, and thus learns what action he has to take. During the course of these dreams he speaks with Kings of Sikkim, Europeans, and all sorts of other people. Actually it is a demon who is speaking to him, but it has chosen to adopt this form.

Before becoming a Mun Gongyop was ill for nearly three years, and during all this time lay almost like dead, the symptoms being the same as with his previous illness. He was visited by both Mun and Lamas; and both divined that he was being troubled by the Mun's own private god; and that the only way he could recover was to make this god his own. Part of the ceremony was done by a Lama; but the most important part, known as *Rum-Keuk*, was done by a female Mun. An ox was slaughtered and part of its flesh, together with grain and butter, was offered to the gods by the Mun. She was offered five rupees in payment for her services; but refused to accept any money until Gongyop had completed his studies: she took only the head and two legs of the ox, together with its vital organs. These had formed the actual ceremonial offering. Gongyop did not understand the words she used during the ceremony as she spoke in a special esoteric language; but in any case he was so ill at the time that he could not even drag himself outside the house for the purposes of nature: he was unable to see properly; nor could he hear. He remained by her side during the ceremony and from time to time she waved things over him. Before the actual physical signs of his illness developed he became as one mad. He would wander aimlessly about without knowing where he was going: sometimes he went to other people's houses, and sometimes he would roam in the forest. He never knew what he was doing; nor did he afterwards remember where he had been. Sometimes he had the feeling that he could walk very fast, as though he was being transported on air. He believes that in this way he

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756 covered immense distances.* During this time he was unable to recognise people; not even his own wife. During the later stages of the illness he used to dream every night that he was travelling all over the world. He believes that in this way he visited Europe, and often went to Tibet and Bhutan. He could speak all languages, and see all things. During the ceremony the Mun, who later became his teacher, fed him with *chi*, put a rupee into his hand, and placed a ceremonial scarf round his neck. She then told him that from that day the Mun's special god would be with him, and that he must therefore learn the work. He started to recover from that very day, and was able to commence his studies almost at once. His teacher stayed with him for three days more, and a month later he went to her home, which was in a village on the other side of the hill, taking with him a load of *chi* as a present.

It was three years before Gongyop was able to practise as a Mun. He did not stay with his teacher all this time; sometimes he remained with her for ten days; sometimes for several weeks: but in between he would try and commit to memory the things that she had taught him. He had to learn the names of all the demons; where they lived, and the various means of communicating with them; also the sacrifice which each demanded. In addition to this he was also required to commit to memory the story of the creation, a shortened version of which I have given at the commencement of Chapter 4. The complete story takes more than

* Mme. David-Neel states that some Tibetan ascetics indulge in a practice known as *lung-gom*. This is a special kind of training "which is said to develop uncommon nimbleness and especially enables its adepts to take extraordinarily long tramps with amazing rapidity. Belief in such a training and its efficacy has existed for many years in Tibet, and men who travelled with supernormal rapidity are mentioned in many traditions. . . . The performance does not consist in racing at full speed over a short distance as is done in our sporting matches, but of tramping at a rapid pace and without stopping during several successive days and nights."

Mme. David-Neel was fortunate enough actually to witness an exhibition of *lung-gom*. I have not myself seen it, nor is it practised by Lepchas, although they would appear to have heard of it. Chapter VI of her book, *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, which deals with this and kindred subjects, is of great interest.

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three days to tell. Gongyop was very anxious that we should 756
write it down; but the flesh was not sufficiently strong! At the end of his third year an ox was sacrificed, and his teacher pronounced him as fit, although he has still a number of things to learn. He cannot, for instance, do the *Sanglion*, a special rite performed at death. He thinks it a curse to be a Mun, and hopes his son will never have to be one. In his opinion a Lama is more powerful than a Mun; but the latter is probably more efficient when it is a question of merely driving demons away.

I asked Gongyop if the Padim god was angry when he 756
became a Mun. "No," he said, "the two gods are husband 776
and wife, and the Padim god was glad because the Mun had come to share houses (i.e. Gongyop's body) with him. The Padim god does not call his wife, but is naturally glad when she arrives." The spirits are not always present in his body. When they come he feels a heavy burden, as though he is carrying an immense weight. These particular gods normally live in a place on the other side of Kinchinjunga, which mountain they have to cross to reach him. At the time of their arrival he feels a weight pressing him down. When they are in possession of his body he is able to prophesy. At such 756
times he does not know what he is saying, nor has he after- 787
wards any recollection. He cannot call the spirits up at will 776
and only prophesies twice a year: once in summer and again in winter. He generally feels ill the evening before, and only becomes normal again from cock-crow on the morning following the "possession." He feels heavy and depressed; also he cannot stand noise. He trembles all the time and sweats profusely. During this time he must pray to the gods to find out what must be done. He has no particular feelings at the time of possession; but at the moment when the spirits actually enter his body everything goes black in front of him, after which he remembers no more. He sits cross-legged on the floor making offerings; by his side is a necklace of flowers and a decorated stick known as *Sagyi-patung*. Suddenly he feels as though he is being poked all over with

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756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

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concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776] the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751] does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164] arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

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756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him; moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

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came from Tibet, and I presume them to be descendants of 756
the pre-Lamaist priests of that country. I have never come across them in Tibet; neither does Waddell nor Mme. David-Neel make any specific mention of them.* I imagine that they are now found only in the more remote parts of Sikkim, and possibly in Eastern Nepal.

Nunjimu are always women, and their male counterpart is known as Pawo. There is, however, no difference in their functions. When a Nunjimu dies the talent passes to some female member of the family, that of a Pawo to a male; but in neither case does it necessarily pass from parent to child. As in the case of Mun and Padim a person only becomes a Nunjimu or Pawo by means of illness, through some form of temporary madness. These people work by dancing themselves into a trance, after which they are believed to be able to diagnose the cause of an illness. It should be noted, however, that they never prescribe any treatment: having made known the cause of disease its cure is carried out by a Mun or Lama. Their functions have been to a great extent already usurped by the latter and they are only called in when a Mun or Lama has failed to effect a cure.

Tafoor's youngest child had been ill for several weeks with 756
what was undoubtedly whooping-cough. He had carried out 755
various Lamaistic services and had also called in a Mun. Finally, with unexpected forethought, he sent the child away to a neighbouring village, hoping that the change of air might do it good. In spite, however, of all his efforts the child got steadily worse. As a last resort he decided to call in the Nunjimu. We had tried several times to get this old woman to tell us about her work, but she always refused: and on this occasion she warned Tafoor not to let me know what she was doing, or the spirit would refuse to function. He, however, was a sceptic, and had only called her in at the earnest

* Waddell, however, mentions an inferior type of sorcerer known as Lha-Ka, or "God's mouthpiece." They "are found frequently in Western Tibet, and may be females. They somewhat resemble the *Nan-jorma* [*sic*] and Pawo of Sikkim, but are not devil dancers like the latter."

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request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*, which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

[i.e., dough cones.—Analyst]

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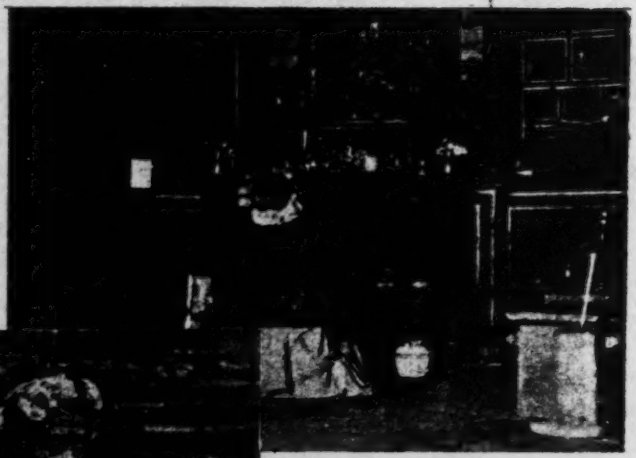

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

[778]

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

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756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
[753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

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756 emphatic. I felt as though I was waking out of a heavy sleep:
755 there was a strong desire to yawn, and I noticed that the others did the same. Quite suddenly the drumming ceased; and after a moment of silence one again became aware of other sounds; someone was husking rice outside the house, and fowls were scratching in the veranda. The Nunjimu took up a handful of grain and scattered it on the altar, snatched off her woollen wreath and got up from the floor. The performance was over.

756 While the dance was in progress I had come out from behind my screen and sat down on the floor amongst the others. The Nunjimu now expressed surprise at seeing me, and said that she had been unaware of my presence. This is the only circumstance that makes me feel that perhaps she was in a trance. I was otherwise not at all impressed; nor, I think, was Tafoor. I asked her to come outside and let me take a photograph. Katel told her not to; but she complied willingly, and even danced again for my benefit, roaring with laughter all the time. I got the impression that she did not really believe in the show herself. When it was over no one discussed what she had been saying; nor did she herself ask what the god had said. This was strange in view of the fact that she was presumed not to know what was happening while the spirit was in possession of her body. Although her speech was at times inaudible, the voice in which she spoke was her own. She had none of the tricks of the European medium, and altogether her show was as unimpressive as theirs. In due course the child recovered.

Lepchas sometimes also employ people known as Yaba and Yama, the former being the male. There were none in Lingtem; but from what I have seen of them in other places they appear to be exactly the same as Pawo and Nunjimu. They are said to be very common in Eastern Nepal and are usually members of the Limbu tribe. In Sikkim, they are found only in villages occupied by both Nepalis and Lepchas; and in the same way that the Pawo and Nunjimu were introduced from Tibet probably came to be incorporated

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in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be 793
convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as 755
healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined.

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would [576]
have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household.

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

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793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

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finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying [516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864]
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

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755 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

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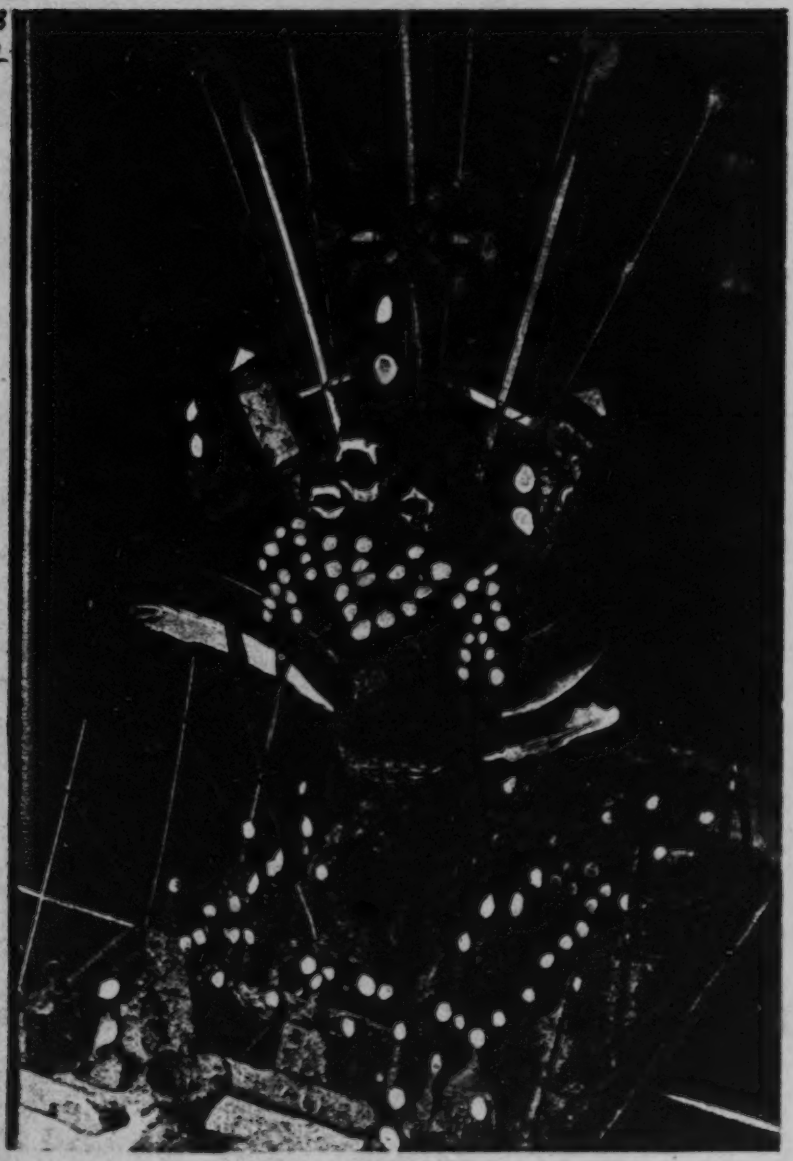

A completed Go-saw.

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THE TRIMMINGS

778 The following list reads something like a recipe in a
775 cookery book. Its understanding, however, is not essential; and anyone who finds such things as "Mrs. Beeton" dull may skip this paragraph and proceed direct to the story.

Having completed the figure of the Go-sum, take the following:

Lukor Chu-Ni; twelve. These are small *torma*, about two inches in height, pressed out flat and stamped with a design in flour. They represent the separate years of the Tibetan twelve-year cycle.

Tako; four. These are miniature cups of dough. They are filled with *chi*, after which bits of raw meat are added.

Chumi; one. A *chumi* is the ordinary Lepcha word for a lamp. This miniature one is made of dough, as is its wick. It cannot therefore be lighted.

Gyachen Diji; four of these are required. These are small *torma* with spreading bases, and represent the gods of the four directions. One is placed at each corner of the figure.

Par Chongo: one. This is a long strip of dough, rather like a thin and elongated sausage. It has a design pressed upon it in flour and represents the animals, birds, and insects that live entirely on dry land.

Sa Julgu: one. This is similar to the *Par Chongo* but rather shorter in length. It represents snakes, fish, toads and all other such creatures as live in water or under rocks.

Chongbu Tip-gyu: to taste. These are small twists of dough and look like cigars that have been ill treated. They are used for waving over people. Four or five is the usual number.

Diget: twelve. These are small ordinary *tormas* and represent the demons and gods who live in the human world.

Gyukar Nger-get: fourteen. These are double *tormas*, joined together in pairs. They represent old men and women, and are the servants of the Go-sum. The sexes are not distinguished.

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778 *Dungay:* nine. Ordinary small *tormas*, which represent the
755 stewards who control the servants.

Sunghliyu: one. A small pointed stick painted red. This is stuck in front and to the right of the figure. It represents its sword.

Thum Shing: two. These are small wooden labels. One is for women, the other for men. They are identical in shape and size; but the male has a design of crosses, thus: × × / × ×; and the female is marked like this: # # / # #. These labels are said to represent all the people of the inhabited world. The female is placed on the right, the male on the left.

Pung: six. Small sticks representing spinning rods, and hence women.

Chong: six. Thin bamboo slivers representing arrows, and hence men.

The *Pung* and *Chong* are arranged round the figure so as to form a fence. The arrows are on the right, the spinning rods on the left.

Yay: three. A large red one for the bull; a smaller blue one for the pig; yellow for the tiger.

Yay are used in every Lamaist ceremony other than those of a purely religious nature. They vary in size from elaborate erections, some ten feet in height, to the small ones required for the present ceremony, which are only about ten inches high. The *yay* is an arrangement of bamboo masts, on which is built up a geometrical pattern in twine of various colours. The colours and actual arrangement of the strings vary with different ceremonies. Some of them are extremely complicated and take many hours to make. Tafoor said that a great part of his later instruction was confined to the making of *yays*. As it is he now knows how to make many different kinds and carries all the details in his head. It is said that complete instructions for the making of *yays* have been placed on record, but in Lingtem no one possessed a copy of the book.

The *yay* is a sort of devil-trap or house. As soon as a demon

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is expelled or summoned it sees the "house" which has been newly made in its honour and settles there in preference to a human habitation. Having entered it becomes entangled in the arrangement of strings and can then be taken with the offering and thrown away. Simple-minded demons can be trapped with a simple kind of *yay:* some, however, are not so silly and can only be caught in an elaborate arrangement that looks like a series of concentric spiders' webs inside several intertwined triangles. It is well known what sort of *yay* is required to catch any particular demon; and it seems that the latter never learn sense.

The three heads of the Go-sum are coloured respectively red, blue, and yellow to match the *yay* which is stuck behind the neck of each.

Gyong-bo: six. These are thin bamboo slivers with tufts of wool at the top and at intervals down their length. They represent *Tarchuk*, or prayer-flags for the living.

When these things have been arranged round the Go-sum the whole is garnished with leaves, brambles and flowers in season. A handful of assorted grain is sprinkled over it, and all is then complete. It is now taken and placed on the ground in front of the altar, after which the ceremony proceeds. The one Tafoor made for me took him the best part of one whole day; and while he was doing it he told me the following story:

THE STORY

There was once a god named Hla-Chongbu-Gadjen, whose second daughter was in the habit of stealing flowers, the property of other gods. Because of this she was expelled from heaven and sent to live in the world. In due course she was reborn in Nepal, at a place called Pe-Yu Chorten.* Little of the girl's early life is known except that she was an orphan, and was taken into the household of the Maharaja of Nepal.

* This is Tibetan and merely means "(the place of) the Tibetan Chorten." A chorten is a Buddhist tope, or stupa. It is usually in the form of a huge dome.

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539 During this time she became pregnant by one of his grooms, and in due course gave birth to a son. The same thing happened with the master of the dogs; and again with the steward in charge of the pigs. For many years she lived with her three sons and earned her living by selling eggs and chickens. She must have had an immense poultry farm, for in a short time she is said to have accumulated no less than three lakhs of rupees, or in English money twenty thousand pounds! When she had accumulated all this wealth she one day took a bullock skin and asked for an audience with the Maharaja. She laid the skin on the ground in front of him and begged him to give her a piece of land of similar size. She wanted it, she said, to build a chorten. Seeing the insignificant size of the piece of land required the Maharaja readily consented: but when the girl got back she shredded the skin and spun it into a long rope. She then arranged it on the ground in the form of a circle: it covered several acres of land, and on this she arranged to build her chorten. She started to work on her own; but finding this too arduous she bought an elephant and a donkey, which she used to carry the necessary stones to the site. When the work was only half completed she suddenly died; and was immediately transported to the home of the gods, whence she had originally come.

The chorten remained in this half-finished state for many years, when the eldest of the three sons called his brothers to him with a view to completing the work. When it was ready the three brothers offered it ceremonially to the gods; each at the same time making a personal request.

The eldest brother asked that he might reincarnate as a very great god. His request was granted, and in due course he was reborn at Budh-Gaya as the god Sangay Chomden. The second brother now made his request; he asked that instead of reincarnating in the ordinary way he might be reborn in the bud of a flower: also he wished to be the overlord of all the demons and gods inhabiting the human world. Both these requests were granted. The youngest brother asked

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that of all human beings he might be the wisest, and a great 539
and a holy lama.

When the three brothers had made their requests the elephant imagined that his turn would come. He knew that he had worked as hard as anyone, and was wondering what he could ask of the gods. To his surprise, however, the three brothers asked no boon for him, and he found that he was completely ignored. He therefore prayed that he might be reincarnated in some form which would make him the master of the eldest brother. The same thing happened to the donkey: he too was forgotten, so he quietly prayed that when he was reborn he might have control of the youngest brother.

The elephant was the first to die, and he was shortly followed by the donkey; so that as the animals had prayed so did it come to pass. The elephant reincarnated as Deut Hlajen; and in this state he later quarrelled a great deal with Sangay-Chomden, the form in which the eldest brother was reborn. One day his minister came to him in great perturbation and told him that Sangay's death had been predicted to take place in three days' time; but in order to preserve the relative seniority in the next reincarnation it was essential for Deut Hlajen to die first.

Hlajen had six children: Alcohol, Tea, Pigeon, Crow, Rat, and Tobacco, who were born in that order. Since he must now die he called his sons around him, in order to decide which amongst them was capable of carrying on his bad work; for his was an evil spirit. Alcohol spoke up at once: he could lead even great Lamas astray by inflaming their desires. When he heard this Hlajen became slightly weaker and advanced one step towards death; but he was by no means satisfied that he had found a suitable successor. Then Tea spoke: he, too, could do much harm. He could make rich men poor by causing them to buy all sorts of expensive things: the cups, saucers, pots, and so on, necessary for drinking tea; butter too was essential, and this was also expensive. Since tea-drinking quickly becomes a habit, people would soon become impoverished. When the father

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539 heard these words he became yet a little weaker; but still he was not satisfied. Now it was Pigeon's turn; he said that he could do harm by fouling the sacred bowls in monasteries. But at this the father only merely smiled, and it had no effect upon his weakness. He then asked Crow what he could do. He answered that by sitting on the top of the poles of prayer-flags, and excreting on the flags below, he could make them ineffective and thus do quite a lot of damage. This pleased the father better and he became noticeably weaker. Finally Rat spoke: "Do not you worry, father," he said; "for I will destroy people's clothing, their books and any food they leave about." But even this did not please Hlajen overmuch. All this time Tobacco was smiling quietly in the corner. "I will go and be born again as a plant," he said; "people will then smoke me. By this means I can gradually destroy the world: moreover, the foul smoke, as it rises to heaven, will be displeasing to the gods." The father was delighted with this suggestion and immediately expired, with a clear conscience and untroubled soul. He was transported straight to Langarshay (?), and in due course reincarnated as the son of the Raja of that place.

He now became very friendly with the son of one of his father's poorer subjects, and the two boys decided to study together with a very famous Lama who lived in the town. One had his lessons in the day-time and the other went at night. After they had been working for some little time the two boys decided to compare their notes. In spite of the fact that they had both studied with the same master, it was apparent that their teaching had been completely different. It appeared the Lama had taught the poor boy properly; but had so instructed the Raja's son that his facts were wrong in every detail. The Raja's son was called Gulung Turba Nakbu, and the poor boy Gulung Tempak, these names having been given them by the Lama when they first came to him to study.

When the boys compared notes and found that nothing

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agreed they decided to visit the Lama together. When they 539
arrived he told them that Gulung Tempak had learnt everything correctly; but that the Raja's son had misunderstood him and got everything wrong, hiding the fact that he had deliberately taught him thus. He cursed him for being an ignoramus and prophesied that he would turn into an evil character.

The boy now became very troublesome, and by degrees turned into an absolute waster. He left his father's home and lived in a hut at the burning-place, where he fed on human flesh. Seeing the state to which affairs had come to pass, the god Hla Chungba Gadjin decided to take action, and accordingly he sent two minor gods to kill the Raja's son, as, quite apart from the grief he had caused his father, he was giving much trouble to the people of the town.

The two gods he sent were Tadin and Dorje Phukmu. Tadin split him in two by entering his head in the form of a thunderbolt, leaving his body by way of the anus. Dorje Phukmu did likewise, but in the reverse direction. As a result of this harsh treatment he died at once, but immediately reincarnated as Yishay Gumbu, a god with its soul divided into two portions. The smaller portion went down to the world in order again to cause trouble, and was reborn in the womb of a very old woman in the form of a *tanen*, or three-headed hermaphrodite. When the old woman saw what she had given birth to she was terrified. However, she gave the monster her breast, but was horrified to see that it was sucking blood. She decided to act at once, and snatching up a kite's feather she plunged it into the central head (which was that of a bull) of her child, which appeared to die immediately. She then rushed out with the body and carried it away to the junction of several roads. There she left it, telling it that it was a demon and must never come back to the house.

After the *tanen* had been abandoned at the road junction it consumed everything all round it, including even the stones and the demons which lived inside them. No one who

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539 passed the spot was safe: he would be eaten up at once. The monster was never satisfied, and was causing trouble all over the place. Because of this the gods decided to send down Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was to remain and control it. Immediately on reaching the earth this god assumed a form identical with the *tanen*, only very much bigger. It had no difficulty in swallowing the *tanen* whole, which it did as soon as the two met. From inside the god's stomach the *tanen* started to grumble at the harsh treatment meted out to it; and so Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was really a compassionate being, at once excreted it on to the ground. As soon as it came to itself again Phapay addressed it thus: "You have eaten up all the people of this neighbourhood, and have done a great deal of damage of every kind. If, in future, you do not obey me implicitly I shall eat you again; and the next time I do so you will remain inside my stomach. If, however, you do as you are told I will give you the control of thirty devils. In order to do this, however, you must remain for ever on the earth."

The *tanen* agreed to do what was asked of it and has remained in the world ever since. That is why, when any of the thirty devils concerned is troubling a person, it is necessary to offer a Go-sum.

* * * * *

539 171 With very few alterations this story could be made to read like a tract; but I should be surprised to find that a missionary took any part in its invention! Its real interest, however, lies in the fact that it incorporates most of the known historical details concerning the construction of the famous Bodhnath stupa in Nepal. I was unaware of this at the time, and only came across the connection on my return from Sikkim, when I was reading through Waddell. It is of considerable psychological interest to note the difference between the oral Lepcha version of the story and that given in the printed booklet which is sold to pilgrims at the stupa; and for this reason I give below Waddell's translation in

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full. It seems to have been purged of all its coarser details; or were they added by the Lepchas? I think this is not unlikely; and that they have also incorporated the story of the Go-sum, which receives no mention in the printed version.

* * * * *

"This stupa enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the Buddhas of three times (i.e., the present, past and future), and of all the Bodhisats, and it holds the Dharmakaya.

"When king Thi-Sron Detsan asked the Guru, at Samyas, to tell him the history of the *Ma-gu-ta* stupa in Nepal, made by the four sons of 'the bestower of gifts,' named 'the poor mother Pya-rdsi-ma (fowl-keeper),' then the Guru thus related (the story):—

"In a former Kalpa—time beyond conception—the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, approached the Tathagatha Akitabha and prayed for the animals immersed in the miry slough, and after saving these he went to mount Potala. There he saw hosts of unsaved animals, innumerable like unto mounds of *murwa* lees, and (seeing this) he wept. Two of his pitying tears were born into Indra's heaven as god's daughters, named respectively Kan-ma and the little Kan-ma or Kan-chun-ma. This latter having stolen in heaven some flowers, was as a punishment reborn in earth, in a low pigherd's family in Maguta in Nepal, under the name of Samvara or 'the Chief Happiness,' her mother's name being Purna. On marriage she had four sons, and her husband's early death left her with the sole care of the family. She with her family undertook the herding and rearing of geese for the wealthy, and having in this pursuit amassed much wealth, the Ma-pya-rdsi-ma (or mother fowl-keeper) decided to build a large stupa in honour of the Tathagatha. She, thereon, went to the king and begged for a site, saying she wanted only so much ground as one hide could cover. The king assented, saying '*Ja-run*,' which literally means 'do' + 'can,' i.e. 'you can do (so).' Then she, cutting a

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539 hide into thin thongs (forming a long rope), enclosed that
171 very large space which now is occupied by this chaitya. And she, with her four sons, and a servant, and an elephant and an ass, as beasts of burden, brought earth and stones, and commenced to build this chaitya by their own personal labour.

"Then the king's ministers appealed to the king to stop such an ambitious building, as they asserted its magnificence put to shame the religious buildings of the king and the nobles. But the king answered '*Ka-Sor*'—which literally means 'mouth + (has) spoken'—and so refused to interfere. (Thus is the name of the stupa—'*Ja-run K'a-sor*'—accounted for.)

"After four years, when only the base had been laid, the mother died, but her four sons continued the building till its completion. And in the receptacle was placed one Magadha measure (drona) of the relics of the Tathagatha Kasyapa. This event was celebrated by the manifestation in the sky, above the stupa, of Kasyapa himself, and the circles of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisats, and their hosts of retinue, and amongst showers of flowers the gods contributed divine music and rained perfume. Earthquakes thrice occurred, and through the glory of the assembled divinities there was no darkness for five nights.

"One of the sons then prayed, 'May I in my next re-birth be born as a great scholar (to benefit mankind),' and he was born as Thumni Sambhota (the introducer of the so-called 'Tibetan' character, and the first translator of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan, *circa* A.D. 650.

"The second son prayed in a similar manner, and was re-born as 'The Bodhisattva' (the abbot of the first monastery of Tibet).

"Then the elephant or *lan-po* (hearing these prayers) said, 'These two, neglecting me who contributed so much assistance, are asking all the good things for themselves, therefore let me be re-born in a form to destroy them or their work.' And he was afterwards re-born as Lan-darma (the persecutor of Lamaism).

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"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed 539
that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil 171
of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is 755
believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be 753
used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum [214]
is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzen*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755
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755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[197] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. ~~Her husband~~, however,
[187] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[177] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923, 1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

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"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805
combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [17]
a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 75
Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755
compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

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751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper
[531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other
[578] person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

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possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

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751 755 If she lives until after November she will in
future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793. We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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755
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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

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754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 793 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

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[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

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who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced 751
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of 777
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [531]
of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

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751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

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the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

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825 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus
171 it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

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796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

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The place selected for the ceremony was in a small 796
clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchin- 823
junga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more 782
venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border 823
of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

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and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and constructed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

796 [793]

Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Cherim* ceremony.

[778]

The *Gado*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gado*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →

The *Rum* in position, showing the line of *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks.

[Facing p. 154]

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796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been 796 801 previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green [373] tea-leaves and ghee. Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

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796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 387] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

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of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [502]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412]
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

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796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was [865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning 778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form of *Yay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented [776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

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several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517]
roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopōn, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning
sing-song voice.

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796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufhciently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[768 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

1 [i.e. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapoor. -- Analyst]

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked. 796 781

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Dzu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell. 796 [533 781]

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain. [781]

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be 796 571

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796 present. Every household was, however, represented, and the
571 communal nature of the ceremony was further emphasised by the numerous offerings of grain which, together with the cost of the sacrificial goat, had been contributed by everyone in the village.

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PART FOUR

Family Life

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[p. 163]
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CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also
346 served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in
[177] close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the
341 influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

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was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

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It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342
care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361
sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777
all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778]
to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

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342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken"
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is go
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls

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these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

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Nepal AK1

L 342 used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in L turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each [335 pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" 465] Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are N L otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open 342 gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to 164 carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

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Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

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521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of [313] course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

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Typical Lepcha homestead.

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Sowing dry rice.

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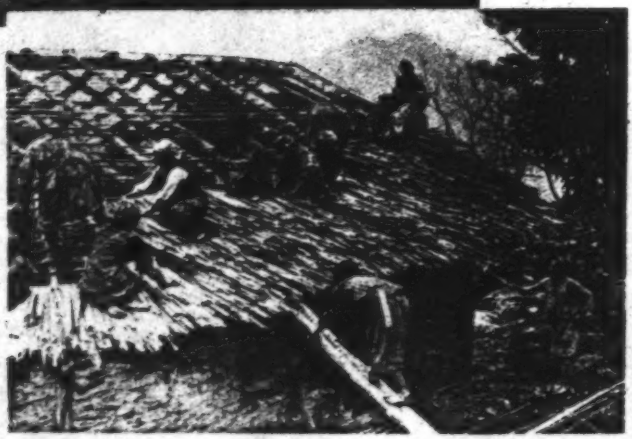

Re-thatching a house.

[facing p.172]

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it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

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There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

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but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [713]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

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351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time
[514 are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence
364] much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform
241 the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243
"dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields),
millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method
of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the
Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177]
introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although
Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other
parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans, one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of terraces for growing rice under water entails very con-
siderable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157]
indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat.
Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556]
wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243
this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157
however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling, although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my mind, that Nepali settlers would increase the yield of this extremely fertile land threefold; but they would do it to their own individual advantage. But if the Nepali, why not the Lepcha? The Lingtem people were always complaining that they could not afford an iron roof for the monastery. I should personally regret to see the present thatch removed; but that is for purely æsthetic reasons. A roof of corrugated iron would doubtless be more efficient, and if the people really want one, to say nothing of schools and other desiderata, it would be perfectly possible for them, by means of better agricultural methods, to raise the necessary funds. As at present constituted they have in their social structure all the makings of the perfect socialist state; but they have, of course, no leaders. What they require is a missionary; a non-religious missionary, that is; someone of the type that has obtained such remarkable results amongst the one-time ignorant peasants of Russia.

Jongu is now protected for the Lepchas and is to all intents and purposes an ethnological museum. Since it is a museum it may just as well be a good one; and the improvement of the people's condition, in which I would include sufficient education to free them from the thraldom of gods and demons, would form an unique opportunity for some educated Lepcha. There are many such in the Kalimpong district, where education has been long available; but removed from their natural environment Lepchas are forced to suppress their more altruistic characteristics in the general struggle for existence. In a district which cannot absorb even a fraction of its educated population this state of affairs is inevitable; at any rate until such time as manual work is no longer considered to be unsuited to the dignity of the so-called educated classes. In the meantime here is a chance for some public-spirited Lepcha; someone who still has some regard for the better qualities of the tribe to which he belongs. If the Jongu people remain as at present their total extinction as a separate tribe is only a matter of a few more generations. This, in view of their many admirable qualities,

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would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a 243 different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as [243] this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a [426] plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are 242 used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this 243 morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved 602 a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

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243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

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who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains 243
were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

I noticed that amongst the seed for planting were three potatoes. These were also to be planted in the field for the purpose of providing seed for next year's crop. I suggested [244 that so few a number would be lost sight of in so large a field. 242] Jiroong agreed: he usually planted them in the field outside his house, but was trying them here to see what happened. There is no ceremony in connection with planting the first seed; nor does it matter whether men or women do the planting. To-day the actual planting was being done by women; but this was of no significance.

Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in [242] the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice- 243
planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of 781
Mayel Rum, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

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243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Śunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old [888] and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, [857] without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong 533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

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When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

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241 The following calendar shows the arrangement of agricultural work throughout the year. It starts with February, which is the first month of the Tibetan year:

February:	Clear ground and sow buckwheat in the lower parts of the valley.
March:	Clear ground and sow dry rice, millet, and a little maize.
April:	Clear ground in the higher places and sow more dry rice, millet, barley and wheat; the last two being sown together as a mixed crop.
May:	Reap buckwheat, and sow more millet and maize.
June:	Plant rice terraces. Weed dry rice. This is the worst month for food shortage.
July:	Sow more millet and also buckwheat. General weeding.
August:	Reap the first rice terraces, and prepare drying sheds for cardamoms. Sow more buckwheat.
September:	Reap dry rice and cardamoms. This is done mostly by the men, as it is heavy work. At the same time the women reap the millet.
October:	Sow barley and wheat, also onions. Continue reaping the cardamom crop.
November:	Clear ground for buckwheat. Make arrangements to sell the cardamom harvest.
December:	Continue to dispose of cardamoms. Women start to prepare the ground for buckwheat. This is the slackest month of the year.
January:	Sow buckwheat.

* * * * *

585 Most marriages take place in October, November, and December, as during these three months money and plenty of 000 food are available, and work is light. House-building and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342
Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356
April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249
third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841
plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784
who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249
offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244]
for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244]
finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249
may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

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249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
777 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
778 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

* * * * *

[249] It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
773 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

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came to a place called Sakyong Pantong, where the Mayel773 people disappeared into the forest. By diligent searching, however, the Lepchas discovered their tracks. They followed the signs as far as Lungzong Chachyo(?) and then completely lost them, after which they returned and settled in Jonga.

They used to wear clothes made from nettles and hats of plaited cane, like those once worn by the Lepchas. They cultivated rice; also pumpkins, chillies, maize, and manioc, which they used to take and sell in the market at Zikchu Thum, a place in Tibet, and somewhere between Chumbi and Lhasa. They did not wish to be recognised; and it was for this reason that they went so far to dispose of their products. But during this time the Maharaja had been forced to remove his court to Chumbi (see Chapter 3) and his servants were in the habit of going to Zikchu on market days. Being for the most part Lepchas they, of course, recognised the Mayel people. They told the Maharaja what they had seen; but since the court shortly returned to Sikkim there was no opportunity to see them again; but it is believed they no longer leave Mayel.

Myths of this sort are, of course, constantly being re-interpreted; and of this particular one there are endless variations. Here is the version given by Jiroong:

"It is three days' journey from Lingtem to Mayel, which773 was once visited by my great-grandfather. He was out539 hunting at the time and came to a place where there were many big trees and a stream. He noticed a piece of wood floating on the water. It was moving slowly along and he decided to follow it. He came eventually to a narrow path, so narrow as to be like a knife-blade, where he saw some feathers lying on the ground. They belonged to a Mayel bird, which is the mother of all migratory birds that come to Jongu. He followed this path for three more days and came eventually to a village, where there were seven big and well-built houses. This was the village of Mayel; but at the time he did not know it. He went to the first house and asked for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But the settled areas of British India have an expensive British administration, for which, in the last instance, the peasant has to pay. This is not to deny, of course, that he gets certain benefits in return: good roads, schools, hospitals, and so on; but these are of more use to people who have already reached the higher economic levels. In the meantime the small tenant cultivator is forced to sell his own rice in order to pay his taxes, not to mention expensive litigation, which seems to increase steadily as conditions become ever more "settled." It seems all wrong to me.

* * * * *

Both men and women work in the fields, and there is no hard-and-fast division of labour between the sexes, although the heavier work is done mostly by men. Woman, as such, is an inferior being, but only because the Lamaist doctrine says so. "Even Buddhist nuns, excepting the very few so-called incarnations of celestial Bodhisats, are given an inferior position scarcely higher than lay devotees"; and to be born as a woman is a definite step backwards in the march towards Nirvana, the freedom from reincarnation, which is the goal of all true Buddhists. But this idea is completely foreign to the Lepcha, who does not recognise any inherent distinction between the temperament of the sexes; there is with them practically no such thing as "men's work" and "women's work."

Dr. Margaret Mead was the first to point out that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced. Two of the tribes she studied in New Guinea had "no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious rôles, different skills, different vulnerabilities to evil, magic and supernatural influences. The Arapesh believe that painting in colour is appropriate only to men, and the Mundugumor consider fishing an essentially feminine task. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability are inalienably

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associated with one sex (as opposed to the other) is entirely lacking. This may seem strange to a civilisation which in its sociology, its medicine, its slang, its poetry, and its obscenity accepts the socially defined differences between the sexes as having an innate basis in temperament and explains any deviation from the socially determined rôle as abnormality of native endowment or early maturation. . . .

"The knowledge that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced is congenial to every programme that looks forward to a planned order of society. It is a two-edged sword that can be used to hew a more flexible, more varied society than the human race has ever built, or merely to cut a narrow path down which one sex or both sexes will be forced to march, regimented, looking neither to the right nor to the left. It makes possible a Fascist programme of education in which women are forced back into a mould that modern Europe had fatuously believed to be broken for ever. It makes possible a Communist programme in which the two sexes are treated as nearly alike as their different physiological functions permit." (*Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1935.)

562 Everything we saw in Jongu bears ample witness to the correctness of her views; and such differences as there are between the sexes are undoubtedly culturally conditioned, no inherent variation in temperament between them being recognised. This will perhaps be more apparent when we come to the subject of marriage.

462 Although we did not collect actual statistics, it is my impression that the Lepcha woman does considerably more physical work than the man. In addition to working all day in the fields, she has to cook, tend the children, and keep the house in order, and is often out searching for fuel: but the man is not above nursing the baby or cooking his meal when necessary. But since so many of the men are Lamas, and in consequence required to spend a great deal of time in the performance of their useless duties, the bulk of the work falls to the women. This is not, however, to relegate them to the

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This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [425 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 [262]

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

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231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

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136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

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play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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the annual sacrifice to Pong Rum, even though he hunts no more. To neglect this duty would be to run the risk of being haunted by the god, who might cause one to drown oneself in the river. Karma no longer hunts, but when he gave it up he forgot all about the annual ceremony. One night, however, Pong Rum came and threw stones at an orange tree outside his house. It was a misty half-moonlight night and he could not see very clearly; but he could hear the stones come whizzing through the air. He went outside, lighted some incense, and put a little butter beside it. "Forgive me," he said to the Rum; "for I will hunt no more." He then went inside and lay down, thinking the god was satisfied.

About a month after this he was sitting quietly drinking one night when his dog suddenly started to bark. He went outside to investigate, but could see nothing; it was a wild, dark night. He went indoors again, but after a little while the dog again started to bark and then whined in a most peculiar way: Karma thought that perhaps someone had hit it. He went outside again; but again there was nothing to see. He walked all round the house, and then he suddenly noticed that his dog was lying dead; there were no marks on its body. It was the Pong Rum come again. Karma now does the annual ceremony regularly, and has not since been troubled.

Here is another hunting story. Some three generations ago there was once a Mandal and his friend. The Mandal's family guardian was a male god, that of his friend a female. The Mandal was exceedingly fond of hunting, but he never had any luck, whereas the other man never came home with an empty bag. The Mandal persuaded his friend to change gods with him, as he thought this might change his luck; to this his friend agreed. They sacrificed an ox, and placed it with some *chi*, butter, and grain. Then they each took their drinking bowls, smeared some butter round the rim, and made a libation to their respective gods, saying at the same time, "May my Rum be yours and yours mine." They did

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224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
[439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177] days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

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shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the 411 824 bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and 411 fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife 412 about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black- 326 smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported 439

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[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

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CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organization.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

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60 curious anomaly may be noted. There is only one word to denote both son and daughter; and similarly one word has to do duty for both one's younger (but not elder) brother and sister. When it is required to distinguish the sex of these individuals it is necessary to add the prefix denoting, respectively, male or female. In actual practice this is rarely necessary, except when talking to strangers, who might be expected not to know the composition of any particular family.

In a small community such as Lingtem nearly everybody is able to trace some sort of relationship to everyone else. This is particularly easy, for instance, when a man refers to a person whom we should describe doubtfully as a "cousin several times removed" as his brother. It is, however, extremely confusing to a stranger of an alien culture; but in view of the fact that pedigrees are common property and that there are no skeletons in the Lepcha's cupboards, no such difficulty arises amongst the people themselves. Until one gets used to the system one naturally thinks of two "brothers," for instance, as being sons of the same father. It is, of course, quite possible that they may be; but on the other hand it is equally possible that one is the son of a man whose mother is descended from the other's great-grandmother's sister! But all these details are common property in the village and no confusion arises. To explain them here would need a whole series of complicated charts, the sight of which would undoubtedly cause the reader to lay down this book in disgust. That, however, is a risk I am not willing to take: but in any case, such things are of interest only to experts; and even they, to judge by the uncut pages in the books of some of my friends, are sometimes human!

852 We may now consider the subject of Lepcha home life in general. It will be convenient to start with babies and children, in reading the account of which due allowance should be made for my bachelor prejudice and ignorance!

Three days after a child is born its head is smeared with a mixture of butter and soot, the latter scraped from the family cooking pot. This is believed to hasten the closing

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of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556
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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake, however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the third day after its birth. People do not make any remark on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to congratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remarking upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is considered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence. It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three days following the birth of her child, but after this she may, if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them) it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783] a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514 add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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time as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own 843
house-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must not tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a bag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended from his shoulder happens to break he must on no account pick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills out. He must not eat animals which have met their death by accident, or which have been killed by some beast of prey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any kind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if he does so he must run away at once and let others deal with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap; nor touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is somewhat unexpected in a completely horseless community), or both the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by any chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period of his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by keeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826] child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period. If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [763] would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

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child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843
father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826
the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774]
full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844
and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event. It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

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844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.
856 By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

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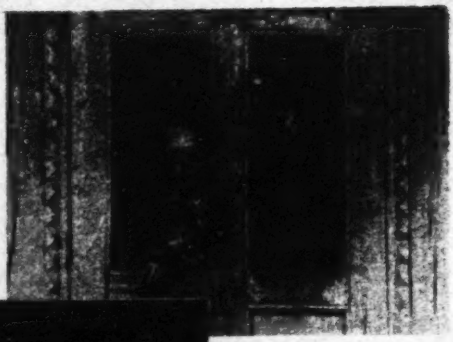
[531
341]

Happy family.



[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

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868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
362 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

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[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[335
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of small shells.

[facing p 211]

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847
are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842 does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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say nothing about it. I have already stated that no stigma attaches to an illegitimate child as such; but when a woman, in the words of one of our interpreters, "goes in for bastarding" it is necessary for the man concerned to perform a ceremony known as *Tip-song*. It should be done as soon as it is known that the girl is pregnant and consists in sacrificing an ox or pig, which, together with an assortment of various kinds of grain, is offered to the birth-god by a Mun. There is also a small Lama ceremony, for which, however, only one small *torma* is needed. For very rich people the ceremony and its attendant festivities may last as long as two whole days, during which time the offerings are consumed by the assembled company.

It sometimes happens that a man refuses to do *Tip-song*, in which case the girl's parents will themselves make arrangements to carry it out; but the man will eventually be made to pay fifteen rupees and a pig. This payment is known as *Soo*, which is the word used also for the special food provided for a woman at the time of her confinement. *Tip-song* is often, but not necessarily, followed by formal betrothal and marriage, but if the man refuses to carry it out he has no claim on the child. Once the Tip-song gifts have been given the man acknowledges the child as his own and is responsible for its upbringing. He has, however, no claim on the mother unless he follows the *Tip-song* up with betrothal and marriage. Karma's mother gave birth to an illegitimate child after the death of her husband. But since the father denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter, the *Tip-song* was provided by her relations.

It should be noted that the purpose of the ceremony and its attendant gifts is not to legitimise the child's position in the community but to avert the damage to the crops of the girl's whole village by hail, which would otherwise ensue.

In cases where a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child by a man who is already married, his wife's consent is first necessary before he can do *Tip-song*. If she refuses her

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If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848 closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595 case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848 able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842] even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553] secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753] of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 — Analysis]

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all 593 clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a 842 request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a [773] tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities [431] of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [131]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

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PART FIVE

Sex

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CHAPTER 11

Marriage and General Relations between the Sexes

595 CONTRARY to the reports of earlier travellers, the Lepchas (at least in Jongu) do not practise polyandry, except in very rare circumstances. It is true that their customs permit it; but in actual practice two brothers only share a wife when one is continuously away from home. The only known cases have already been noted in the chapter of personal histories. When polyandry does occur it is always, as in Tibet, what is technically known as adelphic polyandry, that is to say the co-husbands are always brothers; and in discussing the subject the idea that a woman could be married to two men who were not themselves brothers (in the full biological sense) appeared never to have entered the people's heads. Whether it would be possible for a woman to marry more than two brothers at a time I do not know, since a case of this sort has not occurred in Jongu. I imagine that [177] polyandry, such as it is in Jongu, has arisen entirely as a result of contact with Tibetans. It appears to be unknown among Lepchas of other districts, and in discussing the subject the Mandal was definitely ashamed to own that it sometimes occurred. "It is not a good thing," he said; "but it is common among Tibetans, and is sometimes a convenience when one brother is more or less permanently away from home. For this reason I have occasionally recommended, as in the case of Pichi and his brother, that a girl should be married to two brothers."

595 A distinction must, however, be drawn between marriage 837 and sexual relations: for while it is unusual for a Lepcha girl to be actually married to more than one man, it is common for her occasionally to sleep with all his younger brothers. The important point to note, however, is that she is not married

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595 to them, whereas in a true polyandrous society each of the
837 men concerned is a legal husband, and takes his place as such at the wedding ceremonies.

835 It will perhaps make the situation clearer if I explain the sexual rights of a Lepcha in tabular form.

A man may sleep with:

1. The wives of all his elder brothers, and their younger sisters, whether married or not.

2. The wives of his father's younger brothers, and their younger sisters.

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that the youngest of seven brothers, for instance, whose father was himself the eldest of seven more brothers would have the legal right to sleep with no less than twelve women; but this is assuming that none of the women concerned had any younger sisters. This is, of course, a purely theoretical example and in actual practice many of the women would not normally be available since their husbands would probably be living in different villages: but even so, it means that many a man has "a home from home," so to speak, in several of the surrounding villages. In the two categories mentioned above the woman concerned cannot refuse the man's advances. He has a legal right to copulate with her, and may, if necessary, force her to submit against her will. But in addition to all these women
837 with whom a man may legally sleep, there is no moral
835 objection to his doing so with any women with whom he can trace a like classificatory relationship. But in this case the matter is entirely dependent upon the woman's willingness to co-operate: she cannot be forced to submit. In actual practice the result of all this is that in a small village there are very few women with whom a man may not amuse himself. This was certainly the case in Lingtem; but there were one or two unfortunate only sons who had, legally at all events, to confine themselves to their own wives. A great many men, however, do also have affairs with other women, of which little notice is taken, even by the husbands concerned: but

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351
480
142
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Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Ashyak*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

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835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

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587 *Oong-op* who is prepared to accept her, then the new husband
428 inherits her. Such cases do not often happen; and only then, I think, because, while customary law is quite clear on the point of widow inheritance, there is no means by which it can be enforced. The system of widow inheritance is considered very objectionable by "civilised" Lepchas, and in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts has been completely dropped, even among the non-Christian community; but there is no doubt that it is a satisfactory method of providing for widows in a community which does not permit women to inherit property; and it is certainly less hypocritical than the Hindu system, for instance, in which a widow remains on in the house but does not actually marry any of her deceased husband's brothers. The Lepcha system does at least recognise and regularise the needs of the body; for no one but an ascetic would expect a young (and perhaps attractive) widow to remain chaste for the rest of her life, whatever tribal law had to say on the subject.

It sometimes happens that a widow has no *Oong-op*. Should she be of an age which makes it unlikely that she will procure another husband in the ordinary way, she may go and live with an elder sister, always provided that the latter's husband is willing to receive her. This arrangement, once again, does not call for any very great readjustment; for, as we have already seen, this man too has always had the legal right to copulate with her. But there are always a certain number of middle-aged widowers who find it difficult to persuade a young girl to marry them, human nature being what it is, and so it happens that a widow in these circumstances often marries some older man who has lost his wife and wishes to marry again. The whole system seems admirably constituted so as to provide for everybody. A few actual examples will perhaps help to make the working of it clear:

587 Chano and his elder brother lived together in one house. Both were married; but Chano's wife died childless some years ago. In the meantime Chano had, of course, the right

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sleep with his brother's wife whenever he wished. A few 587
ars ago the elder brother died. His widow and her three
ildren passed to Chano, and he was thus able to continue
s normal life without the expense of remarriage, and with
e minimum of readjustment. The children always referred
Chano as their father and he regarded them as his own.
he relations within this particular family were so normal
nd harmonious that it was some considerable time before
e realised that Chano was not actually the father of the
ildren.

Here is an example of a different kind:

Gongyop was already fifty when the husband of his wife's
ounger sister died. There was no one to inherit her; nor
as she particularly attractive, so in the circumstances
ongyop felt obliged to offer her a home. He was a sick man
the time, and possibly found one wife sufficient. This,
owever, was not to the lady's liking; for although she was
ell over forty and had a grown-up son of her own, she did
ot consider this sufficient reason for spending her nights
one. She soon struck up an acquaintance with Zumbu, a
ell-to-do childless widower, who lived in a nearby house.
e in the meantime had been betrothed to a girl some years
ounger than himself. It was a good match for her, since
umbu was a hard worker and owned considerable property:
e would have presided over the affairs of one of the best
ouses in Lingtem, and was accounted lucky. For some
bscure reason, however, she fell in love with Aga, an
nattractive man of thirty-seven, with a wall eye and a
ideous squint. He had, moreover, a pretty wife of his own,
ho had already borne him three children. He refused to
ten to his wife's entreaties and insisted upon bringing
umbu's betrothed to live in the house. He cannot at present
arry her, since the village elders have so far been unable to
rrive at a satisfactory solution of the case. Having been
rmally betrothed to Zumbu she is to all intents and
urposes already his wife; but, as everybody knows, it is easy
take the horse to the water, so to speak, but you cannot

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587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open. [626] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 428 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

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Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582] living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to co-operate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

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000 these is jealousy. The first thing to determine is the biological status of jealousy. Is it an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy human mind? Or is it the fruit of a convention which can be changed? No change in convention is going to remove the hunger problem, or even the more sublimable sex problem. Does jealousy rank with these? The answer is, yes and no. I believe that nine-tenths of all jealousy manifested by wives and by husbands and by lovers is but a conventional perversion of the instinct of fear; and this fear arises from the taking for granted of the monogamic tradition, as though it were in accordance with instinct and with right. Yet monogamy, except during those short periods of 'being in love,' is, for live people, the merest convention."

Having myself grown up in a culture in which jealousy is closely connected with sex and marriage I found it difficult at first to realise that this feeling is definitely not "an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy mind." And yet there is little doubt that this is the case. It may be argued that the evidence from a single primitive tribe is no evidence at all, but this is tantamount to saying that ethnology has no practical value. It should be remembered, however, that since our own society has grown so complicated it is only in the examination of primitive peoples that we have any suitable laboratory material for the study of these urgent social problems. Most so-called primitive societies live relatively simple and uncomplicated lives; and by confining ourselves to a small and self-contained community it is still possible to watch the behaviour of the individual in the group, and, conversely, to see what reaction the group has on him.

578 It would not be difficult to make out a case proving that
152 jealousy is inherent in any capitalist society. It is true that the Lepchas are a good example of primitive socialism, but we are here not concerned with that side of the question. The point is that these people have realised that in the conditions in which they live sexual jealousy would make life

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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835 but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

578 I hope that I have now made it clear that among the 15a Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

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I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem, so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting, however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalimpong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and becoming the usual thing among the younger generation: and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such "uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me, it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation, and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders, who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder* brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is not considered to be actually incestuous.

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864 In the same way that a boy usually has his first sexual
833 experience with a woman years older than himself, so is a girl
842 generally first seduced by some older man. A number of women told us that they started their sexual life at the age of ten; and in every case they had their first experience with a grown man. The people do not see anything offensive in this; and we were unable to convince them that the custom is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the very high rate of sterility among the Jongu women. Nothing short of a complete examination by a gynæcologist would definitely establish this point; but it is significant that the several sterile women with whom we were on sufficiently intimate terms to discuss the subject all owned to having been initiated into sex at a very early age, and by men years older than themselves.

833 Except when a young boy is seduced by some elder relation a woman never makes the suggestion to copulate, although she may hint indirectly that she is not unwilling to submit. When a youth is interested in any particular girl he will generally have his first encounter with her out in the forest, or in some other secluded spot; but once relations between the two have been established it is usual for him to visit her at home. He will, if necessary, travel several miles in the dead of night for this purpose. The girl will previously explain the topography of the house to her lover and describe to him the exact place where she sleeps, so that when the time comes he may enter the house silently and make straight for her bed. He will usually creep in on all fours, stepping over the other sleeping people carefully, so as not to wake them. Should he be discovered he will at once run out of the house, and will not return that night; but if the pair are not disturbed it will generally be about two in the morning before the boy takes his departure. He will generally not leave his own home until everyone is asleep, so that he can depart unnoticed. Should the parents of the girl get to know what is happening they will not usually be angry or display any other emotion. Tafoor said that he would not mind in the least if he

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knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

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832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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821 sudden burst of thunder, not an unusual occurrence in
831 Lingtem. This would at first sight appear to have no connection with the subject of sex; but actually it has. It is considered at all times dangerous to laugh when there is thunder about, but this is the story Karma told me:

821 "Once, when I was a small boy, I went on a visit to Gangtok. I had been down to the bazaar and was sitting talking to some Nepalis in the shop of a betel-nut seller. There was a small lizard running up and down the wall at the time and one of the men laughed and spat a jet of red *pan* juice at it. It remained without moving, merely blinking its eyes in the peculiar quick manner that lizards have: it then ate some of the spittle. Immediately after it suddenly grew quite dark and still; and then there was a terrific crash of thunder followed by the most vivid streak of lightning I have ever seen. We were all thrown to the ground, and several of the men were so badly injured that they had to be taken to hospital; but I myself was only a little dazed. There is no doubt that the lizard caused this sudden burst of thunder and called it down on the men as a punishment for laughing at it.

821 "Incidentally, there are certain men who involuntarily
831 cause sudden thunder if anyone laughs on beholding their private parts. There are not many such; and in fact there is no one living in Lingtem at the moment who possesses this peculiar quality.

"I well remember when the present monastery was being built: there was a boy from a neighbouring village who was helping to carry up stones from the river. Babu was his name. The work was very heavy, and since it was a hot and sultry day the men had discarded most of their clothing. On the way up the hill Babu's trousers slipped down, so that his penis was exposed. All the women started to laugh and to make remarks about his person. Almost at once the sky grew dark and then there was a terrific burst of thunder, followed by lightning. Babu ran off towards Jiroong's house, which was nearby. As he did so we saw the lightning appear

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."
773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

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Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

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581 539 773 then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyom-far*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

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539 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of
581 devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which
773 I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

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it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539
mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581
you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773
like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285]
such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285]
special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

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581 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour some-
539 thing out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was,
773 she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi;* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

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cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants 581
of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to 539
live on such things up to the present day. 773

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 534
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

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584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chut*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with

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nettles, which they have previously gathered against their 585
arrival. As soon as the *Sarong chut* is handed over the party is allowed to enter the house, where it spends the rest of the day and night feasting and drinking. The pork is consumed by the women only, and the men receive no share of it.

When the bridegroom's party arrives it is given a light meal of tea and parched rice, followed, of course, by the inevitable *chi*. Later on a special ceremonial meal known as *Sohol set* [262]
zo-kup is served, which consists of cooked rice, pork, and two chickens, one of which is eaten by the bridegroom and the other by the bride's attendants.

Early the next morning the party returns to the boy's home. It is now augmented by the bride and her attendants, who are as follows:

Kegu Numbu:	He is the leader of the bride's party and should be an elderly and experienced man. The office is usually performed by some near relative.
Rum fat-bo:	A sacrificer. He makes the necessary offerings to the gods and is usually a Mun.
Aku:	The bride's younger paternal uncle.
Ajyong:	One or other of the bride's mother's brothers.
Changku:	Some elderly friend of the family and preferably a man of standing in the village. His duties are to prepare and distribute the meat at the wedding feast.
Nyom Moo:	One or other of the bride's mother's sisters.
Nyom Chimbu:	Bridesmaid. The bride's sister often undertakes this duty; but she must be unmarried.
Nyom Faming:	Bride's brother: younger, if possible. He represents all her male relatives.
Faming Tyol:	Male attendant upon the *Nyom Faming*.

In addition to the above there are also a number of men to

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585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

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The bride's *Pi-bo* stands with a ceremonial scarf in one 585
hand and a rupee in the other, and addresses her as follows:

"You have now married into the X clan: now you are bound to its members; and if you have any lovers now is the time to drop them, for in future you should have no such connections outside your new family. In the beginning of all things Tarbong and Komsi originated marriage, and carried out the ceremony as we are doing it to-day. Now are you bound."

As he says these words he places the scarf round the bride's neck and puts the rupee into her joined hands and sits down again. The Mandal now asks the girl the names of her family gods and demons, and what sacrifices should be made to them, although these are, of course, already known to all concerned. Should she remain silent, or reply that she has none, some old man of the bridegroom's village will say to her: "You must not tell lies: we know perfectly well that you must have at least one personal god and demon; so speak up and tell us their names. Moreover, if later on you have any children and they get ill the Mun will certainly be able to find out who their supernaturals are, so you might just as well tell us the names now and be done with it."

If the girl still remains silent her *Aku* or *Ajyong* will reply for her, after which she is formally handed over to the bridegroom, the necessary conversation being carried out by means of somewhat obscene periphrases, of which the following are typical examples:

"Now we hand this egg (i.e. the bride) over to you, so look 585
after it carefully." It sometimes happens that the bride is 522
older than the boy, in which case a suitable reply to the above remark would be: "Very many thanks for the gift: but the egg does not look exactly new-laid."

If the girl is of such an age that it is likely that she has had many lovers someone will probably remark: "She certainly looks a little shop-soiled; and I imagine that her pubic hair is as long as Sor Mung's tresses." To this the correct reply is: "Well, you see, the fact is we have carefully shelled the eggs so

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585 that it will be all the easier to eat." But to this the retort is:
522 "Yes: quite so. But it is obvious that the egg has not been freshly shelled."

This sort of banter is continued until neither party can think of anything fresh to say. All the time it is going on the bride hangs her head demurely and covers her face with her hands in order to hide her blushes (if any): but since most of the assembled company are by this time distinctly drink-taken, to say the least of it, nobody takes any offence and the whole ceremony is conducted with the utmost good nature.

585 After this a special dish called *Hik zo-kup* is served to the bridal party and the assembled Lamas, should any be present. It consists of eight fowls cooked with rice. In the portion given to the bride there should be one leg which has been cooked complete, with the claws still on. Following this *Mon zo-kup*, which consists of pork and rice, is served: like the previous dish it too is not offered to the general company. While this is going on the presents brought by the bride (the pig's carcass, etc.) are brought in and put down in front of the altar. Now two old men of the bridegroom's village stand up and offer the *Nyom Kyomo*, as the present is called, to the gods. They turn towards the altar and tell the gods that the present has been brought by such-and-such a girl, who has come to live in the house from this time onwards. They then offer the gift in the same manner to the Lamas, who signify their assent by nodding their heads. The *Nyom Kyom* is then taken up and put away in the next room.

A general meal of meat, rice, vegetables, and so on is now served to everybody, including the bride and bridegroom, who both eat out of the same plate on this occasion. By the time it is finished it will probably be already dark, but nobody thinks of going home. Some of the guests continue drinking throughout the night; others fall asleep where they sit. Every square inch of the floor is occupied and the atmosphere is like nothing so much as a London fog: nobody minds.

Early the following morning everyone is roused with *chi*, a

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bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after." When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook Zo*, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to everybody present; but each member of the bride's party receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot such members of the party as are still capable of walking now proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of argument now follows, in which various men express their opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side. He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and
431 one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be
585 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as
466 follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank
[431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

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This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom.*

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi.* Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu,* or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku,* who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong,* which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len,* which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 177 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 78 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 313 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
[781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [78]
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself
came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of
the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any
way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's
Pi-bo got up and made a short speech. While this was in
progress general conversation ceased: but before it was
finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [83]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking
again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony
of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed.
By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest
was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in
the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms
were now completely filled with people and the smoke was
so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the
room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin
state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring
peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [52]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of
drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still
talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived
Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the
same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the
crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front
of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce
anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene,
since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal
was being prepared and would later be served to all the
guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among
the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight
in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

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000 wife. It appears that in such cases the first wife's feelings
595 are not in any way considered, and the *Thim seut* is given, not to appease her but to prevent her becoming ill, which might otherwise be the case.

586 If a man wishes to divorce his wife he must pay eight-eighty rupees in cash to her father and give her one-half of all his movable property. This is known as *Gay-top*. Children also are divided between the two parents by mutual arrangement. Should there be an only daughter her eventual marriage price will be divided between the parents; and in the case of an only son it is usual for him to remain with his father, who pays the mother an additional forty rupees, one cow, one pig and a length of cloth for this privilege. A daughter may live with either parent; but whatever the decision, the question of payment does not in her case arise. In exceptional circumstances it may be arranged that a son shall remain with his mother, and in this case she gives the above presents to her husband, substituting an ox for the cow and a copper pot for the length of cloth.

There are no cases of divorce in Lingtem within living memory, nor does it often happen elsewhere; but in view of the constitution of Lepcha society there would appear to be little need of divorce, since it fulfils no useful function.

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PART SIX

Festivals

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CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

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DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

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3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought con-
[431] tributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

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While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779]
book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781]
at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358]
Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at
533 intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight
789 the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the
778 day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

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a separate name. It was found that the entire company 796
could not be accommodated on the *Pong Rum* itself, so the 778
overflow was arranged on a brass tray, which the Lamas, however, later forgot about and never put on the altar. In the centre of the *Pong Rum* and immediately in front of the central cone was a yak's head (*Yok thyak*) made of dough, but nobody seemed to know its significance. The preparation of the entire offering took four men roughly five hours. At the end of the ceremony it will be broken up and eaten; but the men who have made it are not allowed to taste it, which seems unjust. This morning the whole thing was brought out of the monastery and each of the five main cones further embellished by the addition of a sort of tin cape on which a design was built up in butter coloured bright red, blue, yellow and green. The whole thing now looks like the sweets served on Lloyd-Triestino liners and is, I should imagine, equally unpalatable. It was now taken inside and placed on a table in front of the altar, immediately in front of the central figure of Guru Rimpoche. Later on, bowls of water and several lighted lamps were put down in front of it, and a jar of incense was lighted at one side.

There was the usual periodic chanting, like bees swarm- 796
ing, alternating with the usual bursts of music, and the actual ceremony did not appear to be different from that of the 21st, although to the initiated the order of the service was doubtless completely different.

About midday a small table was brought out and placed on the grass in front of the monastery. A bowl of *sher-kem*, the special ceremonial *chi* with maize and other grain floating in it, was placed on this, together with a large brass tray containing a number of small *tormas*. A young novice now came and stood by the table, took up one of the *tormas* in a spoon, and dipped it in the mixture. Having done this he held the spoon out at arm's length until there was what I can only describe as a musical orgasm inside the building, when he threw it from him with a shout of *loch!* whereupon

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but [788] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of [535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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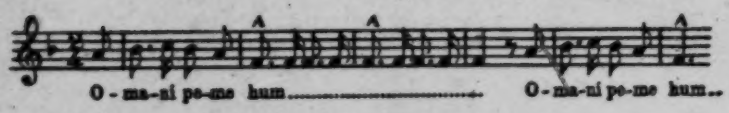

ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*
721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-ngq*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

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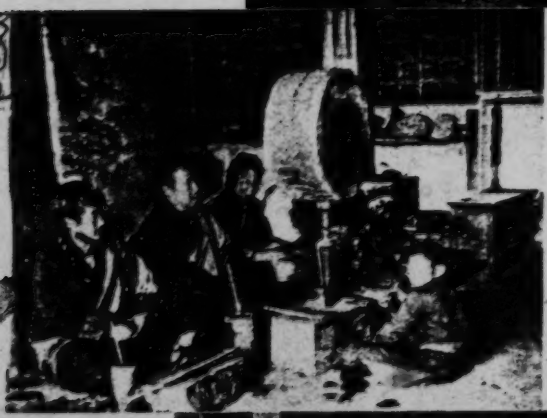

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 274]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p.275]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.
789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
[813] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 This dance differs from all others of the sort I have seen
721 in that the performers, except for the figures of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, are not masked. It consists of an almost continuous slow circling round and round, with a great deal of sword-brandishing; more like the sort of thing one sees at a military tournament, except that the performers are all dressed in elaborate costumes of Chinese silks of various bright and highly contrasting colours.

The warriors formed up in two long lines as each of the two gods made its first entry from behind the dark brown curtains which covered the front of the monastery, after which the slow circling was again resumed. Both Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala did a rather dull *pas seul*, which went on much too long; it, too, consisted of the same slow circling, without any variation in the step. After a time each god gradually danced nearer and nearer the monastery entrance and finally disappeared within. The whole performance appeared to be without either beginning or end, and there seemed to be no reason why it should have ever finished. It was an attractive spectacle for the first twenty minutes or so, perhaps because of the brightly-coloured dresses, after which it quickly became intensely boring owing to the entire lack of variety. The music was provided by drums, cymbals, and clarionets and consisted of the *O mani peme hum* tune which we got to know so well in Lingtem, with the addition of indiscriminate undertones played on the long ten-foot monastery trumpets. I think the tune is more pleasing, however, when sung unaccompanied, as it always was by the Inebus in Lingtem.

The dance ended with the circumambulation of the monastery by all the performers, including the two horses which are dedicated to the service of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, and never ridden from the day they are born. They were plumed and draped in thick Chinese brocades and looked most impressive; but considerable efforts on the part of their grooms were necessary before they could be persuaded to take their part in the formal procession.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PART SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision 437 of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced 426 a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the
608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis.
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong*; but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natur-
[834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426
thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185]
owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436]
ence what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435]
pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436
with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435]
not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, [185] that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 439 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [291] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

whether they should get warm woollen clothes, or have to 426
put up with shoddy cotton. I should like to think that at 439
least the Tibetan farmer made something out of the transaction; but he, too, is in the hands of the Indian money-lenders in Kalimpong, caught in the intricacies of a vicious circle. The remedy is, of course, obvious; but in present circumstances almost impossible of attainment.

Cardamoms are a State monopoly, and the right to trade 655
in them has been sold to the official State Bankers, an out- 651
side concern which, in its turn, also controls all the money-lenders in the State. This is a convenient arrangement for the authorities and saves the provision of numerous extra officials; but even if the State itself assumed control of the business there would be no means of ensuring that the peasants were not cheated, petty (and usually underpaid) officials being much the same all over the East. Under the present system of taxation the people must obviously grow cardamoms, as in no other way can they raise the necessary cash with which to pay their taxes: and from a theoretical point of view their cultivation is a source of extra profit. Indeed, this actually is the case in many parts of Sikkim, where the people are more sophisticated, and better able to safeguard their own interests. There is no doubt that when the Maharaja's predecessors introduced this plant into Sikkim they did so with the motive of improving the people's economic condition; but in those days no one could be expected to foresee the disastrous effects of introducing uncontrolled monetary trading into an illiterate community, organised on socialist lines, which previously had no need of actual cash. As it is, cardamoms are a perfect curse in Jongu.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 14

A Letter to the Maharaja of Sikkim

Your Highness,

You asked me to let you know what I thought about the Lepchas when I got back from Jongu; and the following notes are in amplification of the talk we had in Gangtok last August. If I have been somewhat outspoken in my criticisms I know you will forgive me because, like Your Highness, I, too, find these a very attractive and lovable people; and any suggestions I have to make are only offered with a view to helping them.

The most important thing is, I think, to discover why they are so rapidly dying out. You yourself told me that it is very [842] generally believed in Sikkim that the extremely high rate of sterility among the Lepchas is due to the practice of several brothers sharing a wife. It may be that this has some bearing on the matter, but there is no scientific evidence to support such a theory. Nor, I think, would any modern biologist agree that constant intermarriage for several generations within a small group results in sterility. In refutation of this theory I need only instance the Gurkhas (some tribes of which practise cross-cousin marriage as a regular custom), who are, as you are well aware, extremely prolific. But, in any case, the Lepchas in Jongu do not permit cross-cousin marriage; nor, indeed, do they marry relatives of any sort, except those so distant as to be no relatives at all. I think that the custom of very young girls cohabiting with grown men undoubtedly causes a certain amount of sterility, but it is insufficient by itself to account for the very low birth-rate in Jongu. It is, I think, fairly obvious that some of the men, too, are sterile; but this again is only a minor factor.

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It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu 184
families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the 593
Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom [177]
of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the 195
conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think 007
that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

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another; one, moreover, the tenets of which are not yet sufficiently practised in our own country. But there can be nothing but praise for the work done by the Church of Scotland among the Lepchas and others in the Kalimpong and adjacent districts, where, owing to the inspired leadership of Dr. Graham, whose ideas are still generations ahead of the average orthodox missionary, there has been no destruction but only a building up and strengthening of what was already in existence. In the Kalimpong hills the missionaries attach most importance to raising the standards of health and living, and in most cases conversion only takes place at the personal request of the individual concerned, for it is realised that the good life is not necessarily the prerogative of Christians. As a matter of fact the majority of the Christians in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts are Lepchas; not, I think, because there is less difference between Buddhism and Christianity, and the latter and Hinduism, but because the Lepchas have no caste. It is, for instance, possible for one member of a Lepcha family to become a Christian without his relations with the rest of the family becoming in any way estranged, whereas the Nepali, to take the most obvious other example, who is a Hindu, becomes completely outcasted on conversion and can no longer even eat with his family.

But I am not suggesting that you should permit Christian missionaries to work in Jongu. I do think, however, that you might take a leaf out of their book. What the people require is some simple education adapted to their special needs, and a really sympathetic doctor, someone who, apart from the purely professional side of his work, is also interested in general social problems. In a country like Sikkim, which has a considerable aristocracy of its own, it should surely be possible to interest a few young men and women of the upper classes in your Lepchas, and induce them to devote some part of their lives to improving these people's condition. As an example of what I mean I need only instance the admirable example of Your Highness's own sister and brother-in-

Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

aw, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
een for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
lse I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
etter fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the
resent day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to
uffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible
xception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of
he Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is
esponsible for the death of many young children: with
nedical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a
ertain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies,
ores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that
ne people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
onditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the
omforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to
verdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy
nean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
his, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All
ne Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much;
nd in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober
n the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most
npleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour
der and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace
ith Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a
ome for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead
etotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any
arm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a
ttle. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in
noderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
amas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
eyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of
xpounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-
alled religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
xcuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about
hem.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 15

Return to Civilisation

24th May:

SEVERAL Lamas spent the night in the monastery so as to be ready for the *Boom Kor* ceremony, which starts at dawn to-morrow. The *Boom Kor* consists in carrying the sacred books, together with a small image of Guru Rimpoche, all round the village. In Jongu this is done once a year, but in other parts of Sikkim twice; its purpose is to keep away sickness, and it may be compared with the old English custom of Beating the Bounds. 796

Banging of drums and trumpet-playing started punctually at four a.m., after which there was no more sleep for me, and continued at intervals until the procession formed up at about half-past seven and started to move off. Each book was wrapped in yellow silk and carried by a woman, every household in the village being thus represented. The image of Guru Rimpoche was carried by a Lama on a small cushion of yellow, white and blue cloth: another Lama carried a large bell-like contraption, made of the same materials, on a long pole. This represented the god's umbrella. Yet another priest carried a small pot of holy water: this also was adorned with a "ballet skirt" of yellow, white and blue. 796 778

The procession went via Ongden's house, and the upper part of the village to Tingkep's house, where the first halt was made and refreshment served. We arrived there at about eight-thirty to find the reading in full swing. No one seemed to be in charge, and each Lama seemed to be reading more or less on his own; but it was obvious that many of them could not read and were merely repeating by heart such bits of the scriptures as they happened to know. 796

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all [576] the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As [788] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani- [788] ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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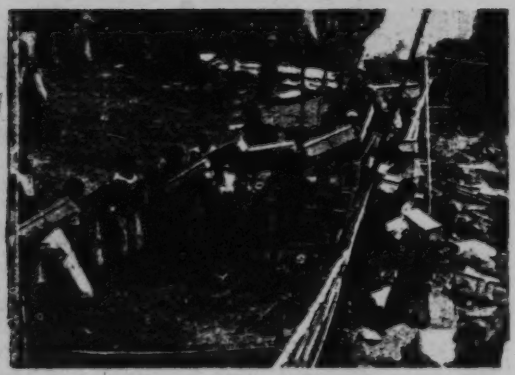

The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The return of the *Boom Ker* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[FACING p.291]

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796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind [522] were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

[832 One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had 522] several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

800 All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

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people say that the winter snow will prevent us getting beyond the monastery, in which case we shall have to come back to Lingtem again. The Mandal, however, has sent word to the Lama at Talung and told him to provide yaks to take us over to Lachen. I am not afraid of the snow, but the journey will be hardly worth while if it rains the whole time. Tafoor says there is no need to worry about this, as for eight rupees he is prepared to keep the rain away. He did this while the *Boom Kor* ceremony was in progress; and although it rained heavily both before and after, it actually was fine for the two days of the ceremony. It seems absurd to suppose that it really is possible to keep rain away; but, on reflection, is it any more extraordinary than wireless?

Tafoor was taught how to keep rain away by the second Dorje-Lopön, who gave up the practice, as soon as his pupil was proficient, in favour of hail-stopping, which is said to be very much easier. The actual instruction takes only a month; but Tafoor says it takes from five to seven years before one can bring the necessary gods properly under one's control. On the night previous lights must be put upon the altar and a libation offered at dawn the following morning. At the same time the gods are asked to keep the rain away for a certain definite period, which must be expressly stated. It is possible to keep the rain away for any period up to one month; but it is not a good thing to stop it for longer than a few days at a time, as this is liable to cause trouble in the household of the Lama concerned, and is also unkind to the various animals and insects which depend upon fresh grass for their food. Last year Tafoor says he remained inside his house during the whole of June in order to stop the rain at the general request of the village, as owing to the exceptionally early monsoon the sowing was not completed when the heavy seasonal rains started. Many people testified to me that in Lingtem it did not rain during the whole of this month, in spite of the fact that there was heavy rain in most of the surrounding districts. This, however, is hardly acceptable as evidence, and all I can testify is that the exceptionally

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early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so-called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

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789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

574 431 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

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presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring 431
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

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491 footway, which is only about six inches wide. Although the bridge rocks and sways in the most alarming fashion there is not the slightest danger provided one keeps one's head: one slip, however, and there is nothing more to be done; one is precipitated into the river below, from the whirlpools and currents of which there is no escape. The Lepchas them-
[481] selves cross these bridges at a trot, at the same time carrying a heavy load.

Palden warned me that it would be disastrous to cross in boots; so, very gingerly, I started off in my stockinged feet. My instinct was to go blindly forward with my eyes closed, but it was necessary to select each separate foothold with care, at the same time carefully sliding one's hands forward along the "handrail" each time one took a step forward: it was soon obvious that if all else failed I could never earn my living as a tight-rope walker. The whole trick of crossing these bridges consists in keeping one's gaze fixed, as far as possible, on some spot on the opposite bank. When I was nearing the centre I foolishly looked down at the river; the effect was as though the water was standing still, and the bridge itself appeared to be moving rapidly upstream. Fortunately, someone on the far side shouted to me to look straight ahead, or I think I might have lost my balance. For a second everything appeared to be going round and round in a circle; but I had sufficient control not to loose my hand-holds. I arrived on the other side pouring with sweat and with a pounding heart. Gratefully, I replaced my boots. I was filled with ridiculous self-satisfaction, which the coolies' unrestrained laughter at my clumsiness did nothing to damp.

We reached the camping site just as dusk was falling. It was still pouring with rain and the valley was filled with clouds. The tent was wet through, and most of my bedding was damp. I did not mind it a bit: it was grand to be alone, and on the move again.

2nd June:

A Lama from Talung arrived during the night. He says

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that owing to the heavy rain of the last few days a great deal of the path has disappeared, as a result of which it will take us another two days to reach the monastery. Also, there has been heavy snow on the pass above, so that it is not yet possible to get from Talung over to Lachen. In view of the weather, which shows no signs of abating, everyone thinks the best course is for us to get out of this valley as quickly as possible, and we accordingly left at six-thirty, deciding to make a day of it and go straight through to Mangen, which we eventually reached at six in the evening. It looked at first as though the weather would clear, but by nine it was only too obvious that my mind was definitely not in accord with Tafoor's: it never ceased raining throughout the day. We decided to keep to the far side of the river, as the path was said to be slightly better. It turned out to be little used, as a result of which we appeared at times to be struggling through virgin jungle. It was impossible to keep the leeches away, and after the first hour or so I gave up trying. Whenever we came to an open patch the coolie who was with me took out his knife and scraped them off my legs: they were so thick that they looked like bunches of worms. It was really a waste of time, for five minutes later they were just as thick as before.

By midday we were opposite Lingtem again, where there was another bridge to cross. I had been dreading this all the morning, but actually I found it comparatively easy; having done it once gave one confidence.

We struggled into Mangen just as the mail was arriving. Nothing much to read, except my pass-book, which, as usual, shows me to possess even less than I imagined. I was wet through to the skin and had no change of clothes, so spent the evening dressed in a magnificent fur-lined sort of mandarin's robe of crimson silk, which Palden managed to borrow from a local Kazi. The coolies arrived at ten p.m.

4th June:

I was unable to move yesterday owing to my legs having

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swollen so much from the leech-bites that I could not get my boots on. It was such a relief to walk on a proper path again that the eighteen miles into Gangtok passed in a flash, and I did not even notice the unevenness of the cobbled path, which on other occasions has seemed so tiring. We reached the bungalow at half-past five, only to find it filled with tourists from Darjeeling. However, the custodian fixed me up in a small shack normally reserved for Tibetan travellers, where I gratefully tore the stockings off my bleeding legs. Leech-bites are not painful; but after the first day they itch in a most intolerable manner.

I was feeling tired and hungry, and not in the best of moods, when one of those desiccated spinsters with a passion for animals, a type peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon race, descended upon me. I produced my politest smile, in the hope that she might at least offer me a cup of tea; but it was not for this that she had come: "Did I know if it was true," she said, "that the Everest Expeditions had slept in this bungalow on their way to Tibet? It would be thrilling to think that one was actually occupying the same bungalow, would it not?" I winked at the bungalow guardian, an old friend, who knew sufficient English to follow the conversation, but before I could think of a suitably fatuous answer she had rattled on again: "I wonder if you could tell me," she said, "what it would cost for me to send my cage of parrots from Calcutta to Bombay?" Fortunately, the arrival of my baggage saved me from further encounters.

6th June, 1937:

Left Gangtok by car in pouring rain at half-past four and arrived at the Odlings' house in Kalimpong just as they were sitting down to dinner; and at once became conscious of my travel-stained appearance. Freddy Chapman, just back from climbing Chomolhari, also there *en route* to England. There is undoubtedly something to be said in favour of polished tables, good food, gleaming

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491

A Lepcha bridge.

411
291
142

Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

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glass and all the other concomitants of a civilised home. But the pleasure soon palls; for me the wandering life is the only permanent happiness. Soon, I must move on again.

THE END

Kalimpong—Hollywood, Florida.
July—December, 1937.

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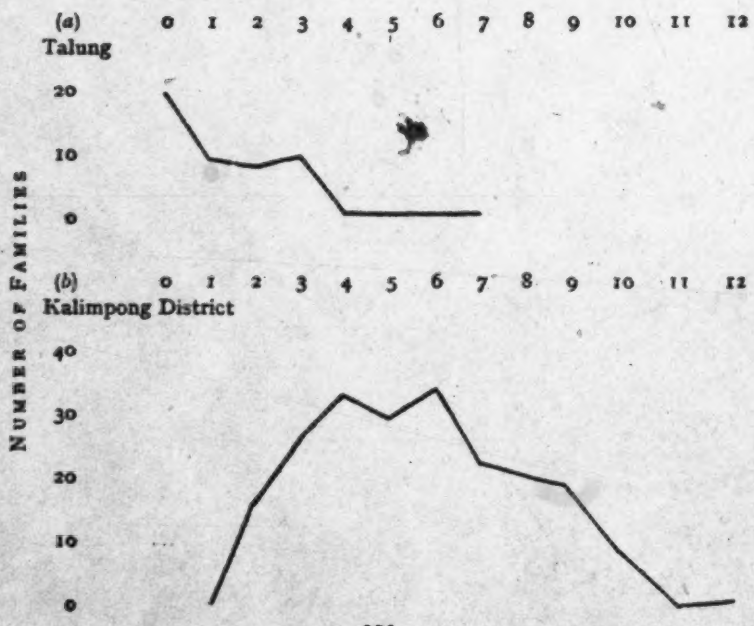
APPENDIX I

162 THE charts below show the relative sizes of Lepcha families
184 in (*a*) The Talung Valley, and (*b*) the Kalimpong District of British India. The figures for Kalimpong were very kindly supplied by the Rev. W. M. Scott, Church of Scotland Guild Mission. Figures of childless marriages in this district are unfortunately not available; but Mr. Scott informs me that such a state is rare. I have confined the details of the Talung to families which I believe to be completed. This distinction has not been made in the Kalimpong figures; but for comparative purposes it makes little difference.

Number of children in family.



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APPENDIX 2

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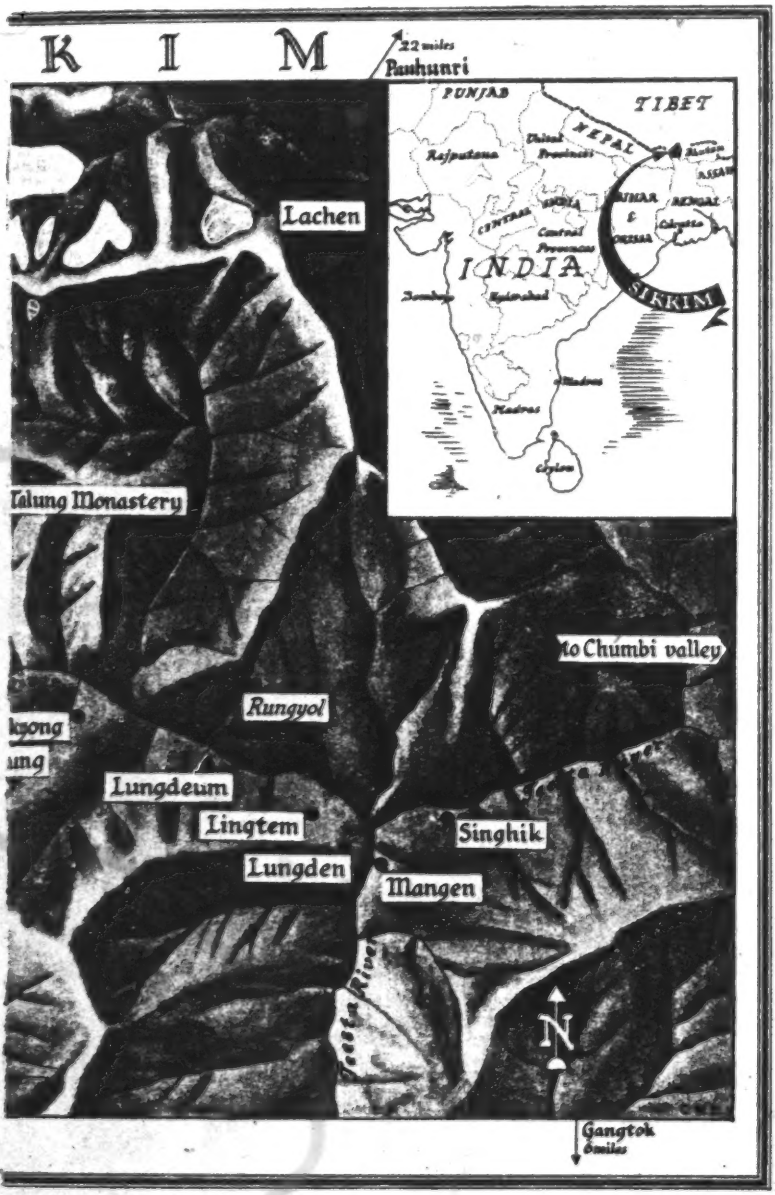

[end map (B)]

[For general protective ceremonial, usually taking place in the spring and autumn, see also category 796.]

[Information concerning the Mun, who is a combination shaman, magician and diviner, has been placed in category 756.]

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HÅKAN OHLSSONS BOKTRYCKERI, LUND, SWEDEN

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Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

R. DE NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ
Kalimpong, Bengal

224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed
224 on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consump-
262 tion — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept,
177 exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who
224 frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

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784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sä lí*). It is
411 always made of bamboo, with a string (*sä lí grím*) made either of
[283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kü ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kä fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pün hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pä kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

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the poison is prepared only shortly before the hunt begins. The root 411
is ground between two stones and then some water is added to form 278
a thick paste. Lepcha hunters are very careful in handling aconite 224
and should their hands show even a small cut caused during house or field work, they will refrain from using the poison on this day. Should an animal be killed by a poisoned missile, the hunter will wait until the body of the prey has grown cold — »the poison returns then from the heart to the wound« — and afterwards that part of the body, which had been wounded is cut off and thrown away.

Hunting weapons

Four different kinds of bow are used by the Lepchas: 411

1. The hunting bow in the average 140 cms long. This type of bow was also used in warfare.
2. A bow, in the average 180 cms long, used in marksmanship. The central part of the bow's shaft (*pyăng shing*) is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo, cut in a typical Lepcha design and fastened to the rod of the bow by resin and strings. The arrows, used for this bow, have a simple, conical iron point without barbs.
3. *Da bryó să lí*, pellet bow, in the average 150 cms long, used for killing birds. The centre of the bow's rod is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo. Four small, flat slivers of bamboo are bound together in the middle of the bow-string to form a small square, upon which a clay-ball (*da bryó*) can be placed. This central piece of the bow-string is called *să lí bryeng*. The bow-string is fastened to the shaft of the bow in such a way, that it remains slightly turned to the right, allowing the missile to fly past the bow and the hand which holds it. — The clay-balls, used for the *da bryó să lí* are usually burned to make them harder. The pellet bow can be seen very frequently in use during harvest time, when the fields have to be guarded against birds.

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411 4. A small cross-bow is employed by the Lepchas in an automatic trap, which will be described later.

The bow is carried over the shoulder or in the hand, while a simple bamboo tube, which can be closed with a lid of the same material, serves as a quiver (*sŭ lu*).

It is customary among the Lepchas to handle the bow and arrow in the following way: The left hand grasps the rod of the bow in its centre and the upstretched thumb presses the shaft of the arrow gently against the bow. The first finger and the middle finger of the right hand together pull the bow-string, the stump end of the arrow resting between these two fingers. — To prevent injury from the released bow-string, the left armwrist is usually protected by a piece of leather, a woven bamboo bracelet (*tŭk bya*) or by a ring, made of a cow's horn.

411 Occasionally Lepcha hunters use a spear (*sŭng hlyo*); its barbed
224 iron head has in the average a length of 35 cms. The spear is mostly used when hunting bear or wild pig. Some Lepcha hunters even claim, that a poisoned spear can be used successfully for killing a rhino, which is said to have one weak spot in its back where a mortal wound can be inflicted.

224 Stories circulating among the Lepchas narrate that formerly pointed and poisoned wooden logs were used for killing elephants. After finding a passage in the jungle frequented by elephants — mostly near a place where elephants would come to drink — several hunters climbed on some high trees on both sides of the passage, suspending the log with the help of ropes above the trail. When an elephant passed below, the log was released at a favourable moment to wound the animal in the neck. The prey was then simultaneously attacked by other hunters with poisoned spears.

Traps

A great variety of traps are used by the Lepchas and only the most frequent types should be mentioned here.

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R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

For catching jungle fowl, hares and other small game, a spring bow (*ver sak*) is set in the following way. A short piece of wood, with a broad notch in its upper part, is stuck firmly into the ground and then another piece of wood, which has a notch loosely fitting into that of the first piece, is placed into it in a horizontal position. A bamboo shoot or a small tree is bent, a string attached to it and, lastly, a sling is made, which is led over the upper, horizontal arm of the previously described device. The bait is placed on the sling and by pulling at it, the horizontal arm slips out of the vertical piece and thus releases the trap. — The same kind of trap, only in a larger size, is used for catching deer. 223 224

Another kind of sling trap used for catching jungle fowl is the so-called *ma ló*. It consists of a row of slings, made of the hair of a horse-tail, which are suspended from a fixed horizontal beam. 223

A Lepcha dead-fall (*kóp*) for killing jungle fowl, is constructed as follows: A string is fastened to a tree and then led over a flat stone; the string ends in a short bamboo stick, to which a bait is fastened. Then another short string is bent into a loop and its two ends are firmly fastened to the ground at the bottom of the stone and the bamboo stick with the bait is then pulled through the loop, formed by the lower string, the tension of both strings holding the stone in a tilted position. A slight movement of the bamboo piece causes the upper sling to slip out of the loop and the stone thus drops on top of the animal.

Another kind of dead-fall, which has to be set on a jungle path, is the so-called *shil*. It consists of a heavy wooden beam, supported on one side by a lightly placed stick, which might be easily knocked down by an animal running along the path.

For catching birds, a small grill is made out of a few bamboo sticks, and is afterwards smeared with tarry birdlime (*a' yók*), obtained from a *Ficus* tree. The birdlime is usually kept ready for use in a small bamboo container (*po tek*). The grill, already smeared with bird lime, is known as *a' yók pün grim*; it is placed over [314 824]

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223 troughs, filled with water, over springs, where birds come to drink or on the tops of trees.

224 An automatic spear trap (*sa lak*) is used for killing deer and sometimes a number of such traps are set, should a man-eating tiger roam around a settlement. In this case, people are warned to stay in the houses until the hunters have removed the traps again. The spear-traps are set with great care and at a certain hight, the hunter calculating the size of the tiger from its footprints. The spear-trap is made as follows: A huge bamboo tube is cut lengthwise and firmly fixed at a certain height and position with the help of several bamboo supports. Then a long piece of bamboo is fastened horizontally above the ground — at the same height of the bamboo tube — and bent strongly backwards until one end of it reaches the bamboo tube, where it is then held in its spanned position by means of a simple cock. A string is fastened to the latter and stretched low across the jungle path. At last a strong piece of bamboo, the front-end of which has been cut to a sharp point and usually poisoned, is placed in the tube as a missile. — Usually another string, also connected with the cock, is spanned breast high and further away in the direction from which a man might approach. If somebody then stumbles unaware into the trap, the missile is released beforehand without causing harm.

A small cross-bow trap (*sä lak tyäk*) is used for killing rats. It consists of a miniature cross-bow which aims into a bamboo tube, closed at its further end. The bow-string is cocked over one end of a movable bamboo stick, the other end of it, to which some bait is attached, reaching into the bamboo tube. By a slight pull at the bait, the stick, which holds back the bow-string, is moved and the arrow thus released. — It may be mentioned in this connection that poisoned food is also often laid out for killing rats, mice and other animals, who harm the crops.

223 Jungle fowl is sometimes caught with the help of a tent-like net.
286 Its top is loosely hung up on a branch and its sides are fastened to the ground. On one side only, an entrance is left by lifting the flap

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of the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223 bait on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself 286 in a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits the stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or he simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from the branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224 by a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the cooperation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pitfalls (*tüng hóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made of a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824] constructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the latter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino would habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters claim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and easily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door was constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages with trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys who cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of hunters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a cliff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the wild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the spikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a line of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas fear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and become a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226 to a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

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226 serves only to supply some food in addition to that obtained by tilling the fields and raising cattle. The following fishing devices are used by the Lepchas:

An ordinary fishing rod (*vór ham*) of bamboo, with a string and an iron hook (*vór*), upon which a bait is placed. — Similar to this is a simple device, certainly more ancient, called *hryeng*. Here the hook is substituted by a short, sharp piece of bamboo, which gets stuck in the throat of the fish.

Sometimes, a series of baited hooks is immersed in a river. The end of every line is wound around heavy stones lying on the bank and each string is then bent to form a sharp angle, being held in this position by a small stone. Should a fish get caught, the line will be moved out of its position and the fisherman who after some time comes to control the trap will thus recognize that a fish has been hooked.

226 Various kinds of nets, mostly made of the fibres of creeper plants,
226 are used; the most frequent type of net is the so-called *süng li*, a conical throwing net. When spread out it is in the average some 140 cms high and its diameter measures approximately 160 cms. Around its opening, oblong pieces of lead are fastened and a long, strong rope is attached to its upper part. The fisherman, standing in the river, winds the rope loosely over his arm and then at a favourable moment throws the net quickly over the fish.

226 *Tŭk shor*: A simple bamboo trap, in the average some 60 cms long and 30 cms in diameter. To construct this device, a strong piece of bamboo is cut lengthwise, to three quarters of its total length, into a great number of sections. These sections are then bent apart and held in this position by a woven bamboo ring, the trap thus taking the form of a funnel. — Usually, several *tŭk shor* are placed in a row, near a stony barrier in the river, where fish are likely to jump and might thus fall into the trap, fig. 1.

Kŭr vyo: A pocket, made of bamboo; also the *kŭr vyo* is fastened to a barrier in the river, to catch the fish who are trying to jump the obstacle.

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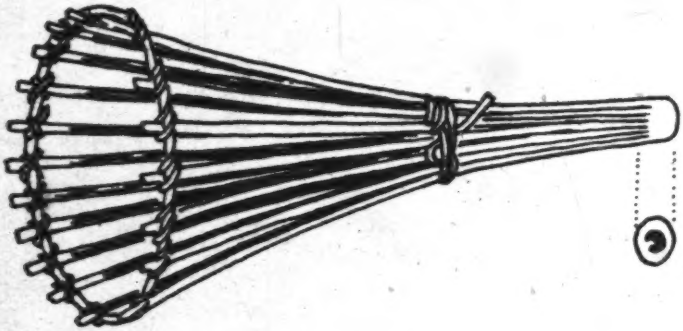

Fig. 1. A simple bamboo trap.

Ról or *Yet*: A huge chute made of bamboo, which is placed close to a small waterfall, above the surface of the river. Its planks are set wide apart to allow the water, which falls on it from above, to flow quickly away, while bigger fish are left dry on the boards.

Fit: A narrow-woven bamboo basket with long spikes at its opening, which are turned towards the inside of the trap, preventing the fish, which had entered the basket, from leaving it again. The *fit* is placed into the water and held down by a stone, placed on top of it. The fish, which has been caught, is removed through a slit in the bottom of the basket; this opening is afterwards closed again with the help of a bamboo string.

A heavy stone or hammer is used to hit the stones under which some fish have taken refuge. The dazed fish are then caught by hand or with the help of a net. This method is mostly applied during the dry season, when the streams are very low. — Occasionally, Lepcha fishermen use also bow and arrow to kill fish.

For the following methods of fishing, the cooperation of several fishermen is required:

A stone barrier is erected across a river, leaving only one opening

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226 in the wall, into which a huge, narrow-woven basket is placed. A beating line is then formed and the fish are driven into the trap.

226 At a favourable spot, by diverting a river into a channel and then 278 erecting barriers of sand and stone, a small artificial lake is made in the old river bed. Afterwards, huge quantities of *a'ung el* (*Artemisia vulgaris*) are collected, placed into the lake and pounded. Then cut pieces of a strong creeper (*brüng*) are thrown into the pool, and the juice of these plants disolving in the water will poison all the fish which had been trapped in the artificially made lake.

226 All the catch, obtained by collective methods of fishing, is eventually divided equally among the participants.

NOTES

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de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R., Ancient Funeral Ceremonies of the Lepchas. Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. V, No. 1. Lucknow 1951.

2. The rites and beliefs, connected with Lepcha hunting and fishing, will be dealt with later in a separate publication.

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ANCIENT FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE LEPCHAS

R. NEBESKY DE WOJKOWITZ

177 The teachings and rites of the Unreformed School of Tibetan Buddhism—nowadays the dominant creed in the Sikkim State—have deeply influenced the beliefs and religious practices of the Lepchas, the main group of aboriginal inhabitants in the Sikkim area. In the course of four centuries, which passed since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism into Sikkim,[1] the original Lepcha traditions became so closely intermingled with ideas and customs of Tibetan origin,[2] that it is now a most difficult task to separate these two groups from each other ; this state is still more complicated by the fact that the Lepchas accepted—even if only in a smaller degree—also some of the traditions and customs of the neighbouring Mangars, Limbus,[3] Nepalese and Bhutanese. Among many other customs also ideas concerning the human soul, death and its causes, life after death, etc., as well as the funeral ceremonies themselves were greatly changed under Tibetan influence. Thus the belief in a judgement of the soul by the Lord of the Dead, *Cho ge pă no*[4] (Tb. *Chhos kyi rgyal po*), the migration of the soul through the perils of the *Bar do*[5] (Tb. *Bar do*)—the stage between death and new life—and its rebirth in one of the "six worlds", the punishment of sinners in hell or *Nyó lyang* (Tb. *dMyal ba*), and other well known theories of Tibetan Buddhism are therefore today [764] widely spread among the Lepchas. Oral tradition, however, preserved accounts of the early Lepcha customs and in some of the remote, scarcely accessible valleys of Sikkim the old funeral rites are said to be still observed.

774 According to the old Lepcha belief,[6] the soul[7] is given to a human being by *Fă gróng thíng* and his wife *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the 775 Lepcha race,[8] at the moment of birth. *Nă zóng nyo*, who is also responsible for the conception, determines of which sex the child is going to be. The place from which the soul comes and to which it again returns after a man's death, is called *Rŭm lyang*, "the place of gods". It is believed, that this place lies somewhere in the hills, close to Mount Kanchenjunga.[9] The soul, once it has returned to the *Rŭm lyang*, will stay there with the spirits of the ancestors and not reincarnate in this world again. It also will not have to undergo any punishment for the sins, which the deceased might have committed during his lifetime.

At the time of birth, the soul is believed to be very small, but later on it becomes gradually bigger, keeping pace with the growth of the body. The soul of a living being is called *A pil* and it

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774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies, in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul. A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung* and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes. Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house, where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
764 person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

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prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away. 776 764

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death. 776 761 828

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol kung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one. 776 764 775

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life 776

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776 to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo sǎ rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

775 At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a 764 *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

[784] When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water ; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

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on the forehead to be presented by the spirit to *Fă gróng thing*, the 764
male ancestor of the Lepchas. A half seer of rice was measured, wrapped in a piece of cloth and placed at the side of the dead, "to serve as food on the road"; while in common life always a heaped measure is taken, in this case the measure is linear.

The corpse was taken out of the house by an opening, which had been made either in a wall or in the floor, as the dead was not supposed to leave his former residence by the door. After the corpse had been brought into the open, it was placed on a bamboo stetcher or—according to Tibetan custom—its legs were bent, the knees drawn towards the chin and then fastened in this position with a band. In the latter case, the body was ultimately placed into an old basket and then carried on the back by anybody strong enough, to the cemetery. The top of the basket was usually covered with a piece of nice, embroidered cloth, which however was not burried along with the dead.

Today, in consequence of Tibetan influence, the dead are burnt on 764
pyres and the ashes immerged in a river. The Sikkimese lamas, who 177
introduced this custom, claim that by burning a dead one certainly avoids his soul becoming the victim of a malignant spirit and thus the old rites of freeing a soul from the power of a demon or the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, which were formerly performed by a *Mŭn*, became unnecessary. Nowadays, the majority of the Lepcha people burn their dead and only in a few very remote places some of the old funeral customs, like the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, are still practised. Mostly however, lamas are called today into the house to conduct the necessary ceremonies and to guide the soul on the way to the other world, as prescribed by the Buddhist religion; very frequently however also a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* are fetched to say simultaneously some prayers according to Lepcha tradition.

In former times, very elaborate funeral ceremonies were 764
performed and it was customary, to bury the dead in graves. Some details of these ceremonies as well as the form of the grave varied with the different clans and localities.

It seems, that at least three different types of grave were developed by the various Lepcha clans:[14]

(a) The *cŏk*, a pit-grave with a circular base; the dead was placed in this grave either in a reclining or erect position, his face turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga.

(b) A pit-grave called *cŏk den*,—with a square base—into which the corpse was put in erect position and facing Kanchenjunga.

(c) An oblong grave, the *cŏk bli*, in which the dead was buried in a reclining position, turned in the same manner as before,

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764 On top of each grave a small hillock was made, with a tombstone (*cók bum*) in the middle; the grave thus marked was called *cók de*. The inside of the pit was carefully laid out with stones, so that the earth would not touch the corpse. The reason, why the dead were always turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga was that they "should see the mountain, from which the Lepchas originated."

According to the custom of various localities, people were either buried in single graves, which were made in the fields, the jungle or—more frequently—close to a river, or on cemeteries, called *cók bróng lyang* or *cók bram lyang*. While the single graves were mostly destroyed in the course of time, the site of the ancient cemeteries is still [766] often remembered.—Children below the age of ten were buried without the full ceremonial. Women, who died together with their child in childbirth, were buried jointly in one tomb.

When the funeral procession reached the freshly dug grave, the corpse was lowered into the pit and then, according to local custom, various things were laid near the dead. Besides the half seer of rice and the coin for *Fă gróng thing*, a bow and arrow were placed at the side of a man, or sometimes his knife (*ban*), the indispensable instrument of every Lepcha man. To a girl, her comb, and to a woman her sickle were given. Then a rope made of bamboo tissue and consisting of two parts, linked together with a loose sling, was lowered by a *Bong thing, Mŭn*, or a close relative into the grave, Shortly before the pit was closed, the person who held the rope called the deceased by his name, telling him that his "life spirit" is now being removed and that he should keep away from the living and not try to harm them; then he pulled hard on the rope, so that the sling opened and the lower half of the rope fell into the pit.

In order to close the grave, at first some stones were arranged in a kind of roof also above the basket, so that the corpse was surrounded now from all sides by a stone wall. Then earth was pilled up, to form a small hillock and above the head of the dead, the tombstone was set. When heaping up this hillock, great care was taken to make its surface as smooth as possible, because three days after the funeral the relatives had to return to the grave, to see whether there were any traces on the [787] hillock. If imprints of human feet were seen, it was regarded as a sign that the spirit of the dead had walked around the grave, but if traces of any animal were found, it was believed that they were left by the demon, who had caused the man's illness and death.—Then a grass whisk was taken and a magic circle was drawn with it around the tomb, to prevent any other soul from entering it. In some localities, if a man was buried, a "wild boars nest" —a small shelter in form of a nest, as made

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by wild boars during the rainy season—was erected with the help of some twigs and dry leaves, the idea probably being, that this nest should provide a temporary shelter for the *Mŭk nyam* who according to the belief of some Lepcha clans, stays for seven days on the burial ground. When a woman died, a small hand-loom was sometimes placed near the tomb. 764

After closing the grave, an egg was broken on the tombstone and some rice as well as a bamboo container filled with Lepcha beer (*ci*) were placed on the hillock as a food-offering for the dead. Then all tools which were used for digging the pit were beaten against each other for a while and at last all the wooden handles of these instruments were removed and piled up near the grave, while only the iron parts were kept to be used again.

When returning from the funeral, the mourners had to put up obstacles—as already mentioned before—to hinder the demon *Mă zóm mung* from following them. When reaching the house, everybody who had attended the funeral had to undergo a ritual purification. To this purpose an ox was killed and some of its blood was poured into a vessel and strained with water; the right foreleg of the sacrificed animal was laid aside, to be used in the ceremony which commenced after darkness had fallen, while the rest was prepared as food for the guests. Then a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* entered the house, in which the death had occurred and performed its cleansing, going into every room and sprinkling in all corners some of the ox blood, with the help of a whisk made of nine different kinds of grass. Then all foodstuff which had lain close to the dead, had to be removed and at last everybody before entering the house had to be purified by waving the grass whisk over his head; this action was known as *Phík* or *A phík*. 764 763

During the night the ceremony of "recalling the *Mŭk nyam*" had to be performed and in some of the more outlying localities this rite is sometimes still practised. Only a *Mŭn* can perform this rite. In former times, before starting her invocations, the *Mŭn* had to walk in the evening to the grave and beat several times with a stick against the tombstone. Returning to the house, she took her seat with the back to a wall and facing the door; it was regarded as auspicious, if she could face in this position Mt. Kanchenjunga. 764

Then the right foreleg of the ox, which had been prepared previously, was placed in a basket and brought into the room. Only the upper part of the leg was used, while the part from the knee downward was cut away. The basket was set near the *Mŭn* and a rope wound around the joint of the leg, while the other end was fastened with a

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764 loose sling to the little finger of the *Mŭn's* left hand. In her right hand she took a knife, as weapon against evil spirits.

764 After these preparations had been finished, the *Mŭn* works herself gradually into a slight trance, and with a high, loud voice she begins 775 her incantations. She calls upon the *Mŭk nyam* to recognize, that he belongs from now on to the world of the dead, and that he should not hide in trees, stones, rivers, lakes or fire, but he should join the soul of the *Mŭn* for a tour of the Lepcha land. The *Mŭn* sings now for hours a long, rhymed account, the text of which she had learned by heart from her teacher during the time of initiation. She describes to the spirit the beauty of Sikkim, its snow mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes, the forests, fields and lonely dwellings of men. At last, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit down the Teesta River and describing the source of this greatest river of Sikkim, she conducts the *Mŭk nyam* across the Indian plains, "to show it the ocean". But she admonishes the deceased, that he should not gaze too long at the endless sea, as he has to return with her that very night to the Lepcha land. Then again the *Mŭk nyam* is led to the Teesta and following the river upstream, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit back to the house, from which they started the journey.[18]

764 In the early morning, when the darkness of the night begins to fade into the grey of the approaching day, the ceremony reaches its 775 climax. At this time all the relatives of the deceased, who are present 787 in the house, assemble in front of the *Mŭn*. The dresses, jewellery and other personal belongings of the dead person, as well as numerous dishes with various foods are placed near the *Mŭn*, who finishes now her incantations and falls into a full trance. Her eyes close, the face becomes ash-gray and mask-like. Suddenly, tears begin to flow from her eyes and the whole body begins to tremble. This is supposed to be the moment at which the spirit of the deceased enters the body of the *Mŭn*, and using the sorceress as a medium, the *Mŭk nyam* begins to speak through her mouth. He tells now to his relatives the cause of his death and expresses his last wishes, while members of the family in their turn frequently ask the deceased, whether he left perhaps any business unsettled in his lifetime, where some of his possessions, which could not be found are hidden, etc. Many of the older Lepchas who witnessed several times the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, unanimously state that frequently most surprising occurrences take place during this ceremony. It often happens that somebody dies without having disclosed, where he had hidden his money or jewels, and the relatives were searching in vain for these things. If however this question is put to the *Mŭn* in his trance, she usually answers it without hesitation

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and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated ; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

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775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the 823 spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral 766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and [756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[16] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭk nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

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1. The first and main propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim was Lama *Lha btsun nam mkha hjigs med* (shortly called *Lha btsun chhen po*) who belonged to the Tibetan *rDzogs chhen pa* Sect. He was later joined by a number of other learned priests, among whom the *rNying ma pa* Lama *Kha thog kun tu bzang po* and Lama *mNga bdag sems pa phun tshogs rig hdzin* were the two most outstanding personalities. It seems that the work of spreading Buddhism in Sikkim was begun in 1642, in which year also the coronation of the first Maharaja of Sikkim, *Phun tshogs rnam rgyal* is said to have taken place. After *Lha btsun chhen po's* death his first reincarnation, called *Mi bskyod dga ba*, was found at *hBum thang in Bhutan*. S 797

2. The influx of Tibetan settlers began with the advent of *Gyad hbum bsags* the ancestor of the present ruling family of the Sikkim State, who reached this area via the Chumbi Valley (Tb. *Gro mo*) towards the end of the 16th century. *Gyad hbum bsags* was accompanied by a number of Tibetan retainers, who settled in Sikkim—which they called *hBras ljongs* the "Rice Country"—and who became kown as "Bhutias". They were the ancestors of the eight clans, into which the local Tibetan population became later divided. In the following centuries, also other groups of settlers arrived in Sikkim, partly from the Bhutanese districts of Ha and Pharo, and some even from Assam. In connection with the account of the first encounter between the Tibetans and the aboriginal inhabitants, the Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim mention an interesting episode: "as the (Tibetan) party happened to be riding on ponies, and some of the retainers had matchlock guns, which they went on firing along the road, the simple natives who had never seen ponies nor firearms, said to others, that the entire party rode on huge hogs, and some of them bore sticks, which produced great sounds." S 563

3. The Limbus, who call themselves Yakthumba, are mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim, together with the Mangar tribe, under the collective name *Tshong*; the name 'Limbu' under which they are mostly known, is of Nepali origin. According to a doubtful oral tradition, they are supposed to have migrated into Sikkim from the neighbouring Tibetan province of *Tshang*. The Limbus, who were divided into ten clans, were living peacefully side by side with the Lepchas, who regarded them as distant relatives and even claimed, that the Lepcha and Limbu gods were related to each other.—The Chronicles mention, that Limbus sometimes occupied important positions in the administration of the Sikkim State, and a Limbu lady became one of the wives of the second Maharaja. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the rule of the fourth Maharaja, the majority of the Limbus left Sikkim in consequence of the heavy labour, which was being imposed on them, especially at times of the frequent raids of the neighbouring Nepalese and Bhutanese.

4. All Lepcha words, the orthography of which it was possible to ascertain, are printed in italics according to a simplified romanization, similar to the system of transcription adopted in the Dictionary of the Lepcha Languages, by G. B. Mainwaring and A. Gruenwedel, Berlin 1898. Also all Tibetan words are rendered in an orthographic romanization. L 104

5. About the Bardo and the beliefs connected with it see Evans-Wentz, W.Y: The Tibetan Book of the Dead, London 1927, and Tucci, G.: Il libro tibetano dei morti, Milano 1949.

6. To all those among the Lepchas who supplied me with valuable informations concerning the subject here dealt with, especially to Mrs. D. Mohan of Kalimpong, Mr. K. P. Tamsang, the Mandal of Bong Basti and to one of the oldest living Lepchas, the 105 years old "MamibuRodschi" of Nyim, my sincere thanks are due; I would also like to acknowledge gratefully the valuable assistance, rendered to me by Miss Ray Williams of Kalimpong and Father J. M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission at Gît.

7. I was unable to obtain a confirmation of the statement made by Kali Kumar Das in his The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell, JBTS, Vol. VI, Pt. 1, Calcutta 1896, p. 4, that the Lepchas believe in the presence of eight different souls in the human body.

8. They are supposed to have been created from the ice of the Kanchenjunga glaciers by the foremost god of the Lepchas *Ta she thing* (or *Tuk bo thing* ?).—It is today, with traditions quickly vanishing, rather difficult to establish the name of this God Creator. Due to the adoption of the name *Ta she* for Padmasambhava (Tb. *Padma hbyung gnas*) the main and widely venerated saint of the Unreformed Buddhist School of Tibet and the resulting L 773

[i.e., human souls, see cat. 116, p. 27. —Analyst]

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773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B. : A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tuk bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

000 9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mZod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always
791 male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing*
is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the super-
793 naturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian
deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malig-
756 nant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

791 Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female
177 counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

791 A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bu* and *Ya*
177 *ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by
Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names, under which the Limbu sorcerers
771 are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

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12. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-putso-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namteeemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil.[1] While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 184

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Na zong nyo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad hbum beags*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad hbum beags* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tsen Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *beTsu berung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773

[1] [i.e., during the funeral rites. —Analyst]

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773 in whose neighbourhood they had settled, two or three clans often worshipping the same mountain. It became customary, that each clan had to perform an annual sacrifice to the spirit of its particular mountain. In regard to marriage, there is no obstacle—unless
582 a blood relationship exists or that people belong actually to the same clan—that members of two clans, which venerate the same peak, should not intermarry. In case that bride and bridegroom belong to clans, which worship two different mountains, the wife will have to sacrifice after the marriage to the sacred peak of her husbands clan.

18. They are made from a certain kind of reed; on the top of the stick cuts are made in
791 such a way, that these parts open in the form of a flower. These sticks are regarded as the symbol of the magical power, over which the sorcerer commands.

[See cat. 116, p. 36. - Analyst]

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[Title page]

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THE USE OF THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

R. VON NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AND GEOFFREY GORER

796 The pre-Buddhist Bón[1] faith of Tibet, remnants of which
771 are still to be found in that country, employs in its ceremonies complicated, mast-like structures, consisting of sticks, thread and tufts of wool. These structures, technically known as "thread-crosses",[2] are called Dó (spelled *mDos*), Domo (*mDos mo*) or Ye (*Yas*) by the Tibetans. After its introduction into Tibet, the Buddhist religion incorporated into its system many of the aboriginal deities and numerous magical ceremonies of the Bón; it also took over the use of thread-crosses.

796 Although many western travellers observed and reported the use of these curious structures in various parts of Tibet, no comprehensive report on the purpose of the thread-crosses and the complicated rituals, accompanying their construction seems to have been published. Some information can, however, be gathered from various books on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism.[3] Summarizing our present knowledge we may say that thread-crosses are used in Tibetan religious ceremonies for the following purposes:

776 (1) As contraptions for catching demons. When
789 applied in this way, they are put in front of objects, which they are supposed to protect (monasteries, villages, etc.)
796 the idea being that approaching malignant spirits get caught in the net of the thread-cross, like flies in a spider's web. It is therefore regarded as necessary to renew the contraption and to destroy the old thread-cross when the *mDos* has served its purpose for some time and become "saturated" with the powers of evil; this is usually done by pulling it down and burning it ceremonially. It is interesting to note
796 that parts of the destroyed thread-cross are sometimes
777 suspended above the doors of houses, fastened on the ceiling or placed near the image shrine as "charms for good luck",

[p. 65]

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796 in spite of the fact that the *mDos* is in this case regarded as an
777 abode of evil forces.[4] Indeed, after the destruction of the structure a fight regularly ensues between laymen attending the ceremony, everyone trying to secure a piece of the *mDos*.[5]

755 (2) The *mDos* is sometimes regarded as a "house" or
778 "seat" for gods or spirits and is used for this purpose in some ceremonies, the supernaturals being invited to descend upon
796 the thread-cross. In some cases, however, malignant demons, especially those causing illnesses, are compelled by the exorcist to leave the body of their victim and to enter a *mDos*, which is afterwards carried away to some lonely spot and there abandoned or destroyed.

796 (3) For counteracting the influence of evil spirits or for
789 appeasing their anger, special thread-crosses are erected, e.g. as described by Waddell in the ceremonies "baring the earth and sky demons".[6]

796 (4) A *mDos* appears to be sometimes used instead of the dough effigy which plays an important part in Tibetan religious dances. Thus a huge *mDos* consisting of three different parts and bearing the symbols of sun, moon and the wish-granting jewel on its top, is used at the religious dance of the *Karma pa* monastery *Pho brang dgon pa rdo brtsug* in Darjeeling.

Various names are given by the Tibetans to certain parts of the thread-cross. The stick which forms the central vertical axis, is called *Srog shing*, "life tree", a spider-web like part of a huge *mDos*, constructed with the help of four sticks, is called *dPal dbyer*, etc.

796 According to the purpose they serve or the relation they
776 have to certain supernaturals, the thread-crosses bear various names, many of which refer to groups of gods or demons of the aboriginal Bŏn faith.[7] Thus one kind of *mDos*, consisting mostly of red thread, corresponds to the group of the *bTsan*[8] demons, which are thought of as having red bodies; other thread-crosses are called "The secret *mDos* of *Pe-dkar*[9] (*Pe dkar-gsang mDos*), "The planet *mDos*" (*gZa mDos*), etc. When constructing the thread-crosses,

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when constructing the thread-crosses,
strict rules concerning their colour, the way of arranging and knotting the coloured strings, etc. must be observed according to orthodox traditions. While the work is progressing, prayers and magic syllables (*dhāranis*) are chanted and the officiating priest breathes from time to time upon the structure. T 796 788

Besides the sticks, coloured thread and tufts of wool, used for the construction of thread-crosses, several other objects are often required in these ceremonies. They are: various skulls of animals—thus at the ceremony of "closing the door of the sky demons" the *mDos* is fastened to a dog's skull, while in the rite "closing the door against the earth demons" a ram's skull is used instead—furthermore flat wooden sticks, covered with rough drawings of various emblems and images. These sticks, which are called Tamshing (*Khram shing*)[10] by the Tibetans, were originally used by Bón priests as important objects in their ceremonies. Other related instruments are sticks with tufts of white or coloured wool on top and in the middle, called Yetag (*Yas btags*), cones made of dough—termed Torma,[11] *gTor ma*—and images made of butter with the help of wooden moulds (*Zan par*). When preparing a base for the *mDos*, earth, straw and grass are used to build a series of square platforms, usually four in number, superimposed one on top of the other in decreasing size. On top of this the principal thread-cross is usually planted. This arrangement and some of the ideas connected with the various parts of the *mDos* itself show a certain parallel to the ideas connected with the symbolism of the Buddhist Chótens[12] (*mChhod rten*, Skr. Stūpa). T 796

So far little authentic information on the original use of the *mDos* has been obtained from Tibetan sources; additional evidence on this subject can be, however, obtained from some neighbours of the Tibetans. It is well known to-day, that many of the neighbouring tribes, especially in the south and south-east professed or even still profess a religion, which seems to be very similar to the Tibetan Bón faith. The most comprehensive evidence on this question T L 171

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is to be found in the religious beliefs and customs of the ¹Na—²khi tribe, who have been previously confused with the Mo-so. The ¹Na—²khi, a branch of the ancient Ch'iang live to-day in Southwest China around Likiang, their former capital. This tribe was carefully studied by Dr. J. F. Rock over a period of more than twenty years. Dr. Rock translated the greatest part of the comprehensive literature of the ¹Na—²khi and analyzed their religious ceremonies; thereby he showed that this tribe preserved in its beliefs and customs a very high percentage of old Bön traditions. The priests of the ¹Na—²khi, called ²Dto—¹mba, employ thread-crosses (¹*Na-²k' wai* in ¹Na-²khi) in a number of ceremonies. As in Tibet, these ¹*Na-²k'wai* are regarded as "seats" for either gods or demons. But we also find other beliefs. Thus it is reported in ¹Na-²khi books, that ²Dto-¹mba ³Shi-²lo (who is identical with the Tibetan *gShen rabs mi bo*, the founder of the Bön religion), was transformed at the moment of his death into a thread-cross, while on the so-called *Ha"-shi-pi*, which is used at funeral ceremonies, ²Dto-¹mba ³Shi-¹lo's horse is figured carrying a ¹*Na-²k'-wai*.[14] Another belief is that the ²Ba"¹d'a, the warriors who accompany some of the ¹Na-²khi deities, originated from thread-crosses in the intermediary space between heaven and earth.[15] We should finally notice that drawings of ¹*Na-²k'-wai* are often found in the pictographic script of the ¹Na-²khi.

To Dr. Rock we are also indebted for the information that thread-crosses are used by the ancient Hapa sect, members of which are still living in the territory of Muli (*Mi li*) and Yung-ning in Southwest China. The Hapa erect elaborate thread-crosses for averting hail.[16] These structures, called *Nyata* by the Hapa sorcerers, are renewed after three or four years. As Dr. Rock obtained a Hapa manuscript,[17] written in Tibetan and dealing with the ceremony of erecting a thread-cross for the demon-king Pe-dkar we can expect to receive valuable information on this subject later on.

Unfortunately, less is known about the use of thread-crosses among other near or more distant neighbours of the

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Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ónggе*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18] T L 171

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bón, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now. L 177 771 796

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do, mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye, Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace". L 796 778

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there L 796

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are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
796 and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
796 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
796 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
778 The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
778 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bŏn religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
775 possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*. 796 778 171

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bön terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bön priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28] 796 171

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bön flowers" is mentioned in Bön scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bön origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called 796 778 776

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
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rum by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

As in the first rite,[1] the number nine plays an important part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 72. - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings ; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *looh lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yeu*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yeu*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *looh lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yeu*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yeu* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned
776 before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
177 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
776 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical
171 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a
778 tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube*, *Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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755 a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

755 171 The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned [825] and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

5cNebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from [787]
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depict- 778
ed alike, that is standing, with raised hands; some scratches in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ha deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.
In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat.116, p.78. - Analyst]

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud-* demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 796 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

755 778 171

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 78. – Analyst]

755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
171 is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
778 all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in
[776 *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders
171] seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[761]
796 If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
776 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
778 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
[see cat.116, p.78.-Analyse]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

described,[42] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bos* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 28-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

Das S. Ch. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

Schlagintweit, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet*, *Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

113 WADDELL, L. A. : *Among the Himalayas*, London 1890 (Photograph on p. 387)

WADDELL, L. A. : '*Lamaism* in Sikhim, in *Gazeteer of Sikhim*, Calcutta 1894 (pp. 365, 368, 371—373)

GRAHAM SANDBERG : : *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan*. Calcutta 1894 (p. 196)

WADDELL, L. A. : *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*. London 1895 (pp. 484-488)

DAS, S. CH. : *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Calcutta 1902 (p. 676)

FRANCKE, A. H. : 'Kleine archaologische Ertrage einer Missionsreise nach Zangskar in Westtibet', Zeitschrift *Deutschen Morgenland Gesellschaft*, Leipzig 1906 (p. 646)

AHMAD SHAH : : *Pictures of Tibetan Life*. Benares 1906 (Plates 29 and 40)

GRUNWEDEL, A. : *Der Weg nach Sambhala*. Abh. d. Konigl. *Bayer*. Akademie d. Wissen philos—philol u. hist. Klasse, Bd. XXIX, Munchen 1915 (p. 94).

GRÜNWEDEL A. : *Die Sternschnuppen im Vaidurya dkar po*. Festschrift E. Seler, Stuttgart 1922 (Note 5)

FRANCKE, A. H. : *Tibetische Hochzeitslieder*, Hagen i. W. 1932 (III., appendix)

SPENCER CHAPMAN, F. : *Lhasa the Holy City*, London 1938 (Photograph facing p.8)

STEIN, R. : Trente-trois fiches de divination tibetaines. Harvard Journ. Asiatic Studies, Cambridge Mass. 1939 (pp. 318—321)

RIBBACH, : *Drogpa Namgyal*, Munchen 1940 (Photograph p. , 161)

LESSING, F. : *Yung-Ho Kung*, Stockholm 1942 (pp. 148-149)

HUMMEL, S. : Geheimnisse tibetischer Malereien. Forschungen zur Volkerdynamik Zentral-und Ostasiens, Heft 2. Leipzig 1949 (Ill., appendix)

JÄSCHKE, H. A. : *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. London 1949 (p. 274)

TUCCI, G. : *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949 (II, pp. 715, 740, note 33)

Numerous works describing the construction and the use of thread-crosses composed by various Tibetan authors; e.g. the religious compendium of the "Red Hats", in 63 volumes, briefly termed *Rin chhen gter mdzod* contains in the volume *Phi pa* the following treatises :

(1) g *Nas chhos dgongs gter ias dbang phyug ma yi zor mdos khyer bde bar bkod pa bzhugs so*
(2) *gNam chhos mi hgyur rdo rjei dgongs gter dbang phyug zor mdos kyi bka gtad hthabs bzhugs so*
(3) *gLing b hi spyi mdos kyi zin bris ra ga a mdzad pa bzhugs so*
(4) *bDz gsheg s yongs hbul ias gLing bzhi spyi mdos bzhugs so*
(5) *gLing bzhi spyi mdos kyi las hgrigs*
(6) *Thugs sgrub yang snying hdus pa las/mkha hgro gling bzhi srid pai spyi mdos chhen po zhes bya ba bzhugs so*
(7) *bDe gsheg s yongs hdus las/ srid pa khod snyoms kyi mdos bzhugs so*
(8) *gSang bdag dregs pa hdul byed las tshogs dam srii glud mdos zhes bya. ba ghugs so*

4 See e.g. the report given by Ribbach in Drogpa Namgyal. As also stated by A. H. Francke, thread-crosses play an important part in the New Year celebrations (*Lo gsar*) of Ladak.
5 See Lessing's *Yung-Ho Kung*, pp. 148-149
6 Waddell, *Lamaism*, pp. 484 and *Lamaism in Sikhim*, pp. 371-373
7 A list of names of 14 various thread-crosses is to be found in R. Stein's *Trente-trois fiches de divination tibetaines*, p. 318
8 About the *bTsan* see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. pp. 718-720
9 About this ancient *Tibetan* god see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. pp. 734-736, and Nebesky-Wojkowitz: 'Das tibetische Staatsorakel, *Archiv fur Volkerkunde*, Vol. III, Vienna 1948, pp. 136-155 (Bibliography).
10 See Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, note no 283
11 About the use of this important reilisious object see the comprehensive notes given by W. A. Unkrig in W. Filchner's *Kumbum Dschamba Ling*, Leipzig 1933, pp. 291-398
12 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 740, note no 33, and Indo-Tibetica I, Rome 1932.
13 J. F. Rock: 'The Birth and Origin of 2Dto-1mba 3Shi-2lo', Bull, École Francaise d'Extreme Orient t. XXXVII, Hanoi 1937, Plate XXVI
14 J. F. Rock: 'Studies in 1Na-2Khi Literature, Bull. Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient t. XXXVII, Hanoi 1937, part II.
15 J. F. Rock: 'The Muan Bpo Ceremony,' *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XIII, Peking 1948, p. 53, note no 102
16 See J. F. Rock: *The Ancient 1Na-2khi Kingdom of Southwest China*. Cambridge Mass., Vol. II, p. 389 and plate 389.—A *1Na-2k'wai* can be seen on Plate 229
17 The title of this MS is *Ju thig gi mo sgo phye bai dbang skor ryyas pa lags so*. It is now in posession of M. R. Stein (Paris)
18 Grünwedel, *Vaidūrya dkar po*, note 5; Lindblom, *Thread-crosses*, p. 94 and photograph on p. 93
19 See H. E. Kaufmann *Ethnologischer Anzeiger*, IV, (5), Stuttgart 1939, p. 235; Kaufmann: 'Kurze Ethnographie der nordlichen Sangtam-Naga, Assam, *Anthropos* 1939, p. 223; Kaufmann: 'Das Fadenkreuz in Hinterindien, *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XVI, no 15, Berlin 1939, pp. 193-195; and *Ethnologischer Anzeiger*, IV, (6), Stuttgart 1940, p. 329
20 About the Lepchas, their religion, customs, etc., see G. Gorer: *Himalayan Village*, London 1938 and J. Morris: *Living with Lepchas*, London 1938. It is interesting to note, that the Mun priests are divided according to the rites they practice—into "white" and "black" Mun, a division which corresponds to the "white" and "black" Bon
21 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 228—230; Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, pp. 152-162
22 This god who is mainly worshipped by the Buddhists of Sikhim, is depicted in Tibetan iconography as a king riding upon a white horse and holding a banner in his right hand, and a shallow bowl containing jewels in his left
23 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, Plate 16; Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, photograph facing p. 154
24 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. p. 725
25 Other numbers used by the Bonpos with preference are 7, 13, 18 and 360
26 In Tibet as well as among the Lepcha coloured thread is used not only for the construction of thread-crosses, but also applied when making various charms. Thus, for example, two sorts of Tibetan amulets, called *Srung skud* and *Srung khor* consists mostly of coloured thread
27 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 718
28 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 715
29 See the publication by S. Hummel, previously mentioned
30 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 726

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha
Tibet AJ1

31 A number of local *bTsan* demons seems to be propitiated by the lamaists of Sikhim who regard them as spirits of diseased novices or ill natured lamas. Waddell (Lamaism in Sikhim, p. 356) mentions a demon, called *Zla ba sang ge*, as the *bTsan* of Pemiongchi, *Lha btsan po* as dwelling at Yangong Gompa, etc.

32 This magic square, the sections of which are represented in various colours, is frequently used in Tibetan astrology. According to the well known Tibetan astrological work *Vaidurya dkar po* (leaf 452 a), the following supernaturals are supposed to dwell in the different sections of the square:

On the first, white *sMe ba* dwells the Earth Goddess *Rab brtan ma*, the colour of her body is white and clear like a crystal, in her right hand she holds Mount Sumeru, lifting it up; with her left hand she grasps a vessel, filled with Amrta (nectar). She wears a robe with train, made of white silk. On her head she wears a diadem of gold.

On the second, black *sMe ba* dwells the King of the *bDud*, his body has a brilliant black colour, in his right hand he holds a *Khram shing*, in his left a snare; he wears a garment made of black silk. On his head he has a golden diadem.

On the third *sMe ba*, which is blue, dwells *Sa bsen gdug byed*, the colour of his body is sky-blue. In his right hand he holds a rosary made of skulls, in his left he holds the *iChag lchig* skull-cup. He wears a garment made of black silk.

On the fourth, green *sMe ba*, dwells *kLu rgyal lha ru*. Her body is of brilliant green (blue) colour. In her right she lifts a precious vessel. She wears a garment made of green (blue) silk.

On the fifth, yellow *sMe ba* dwells the King of the *Sa bdag, hjig rten bdag*. In his right hand he holds a precious vessel, with his left he lifts a white conch-shell. He wears a garment of golden silk, on his head he has a golden diadem.

On the sixth, white *sMe ba*, dwells the King *sKye bgrol dpal*. The colour of his body is a brilliant white, In his right hand he holds a club with a thunderbolt on top, in his left he carries the precious victory banner. He wears a garment of white silk.

On the seventh, red *sMe ba*, dwells the great red *bTsan*. The colour of his body is red, vermillion-like. In his right hand he holds a long lance, in his left the white-black die. He wears a garment of red silk, on his head a diadem of gold.

On the eighth, white *sMe ba*, dwells the *Lha chen dbang phyug che*. The colour of his body is a brilliant white. In his right hand he holds the trident, in his left a skull-cup filled with blood. He wears a garment of white silk, on his head he carries a golden diadem.

On the ninethe, red *sMe ba*, dwells the *Ma mo Dus mun ti*, who is dark-red. In her right hand she holds a sack, filled with diseases, in her left a coil of thread. She wears a red garment and on her head she carries a golden diadem.

33 These piece of dough are called *chongbu tipku*; they are mostly waved over the invalid towards the end of the exorcism. They are used by lamas and Mun alike. The act of waving away the forces of evil is called *pek* by the Lepchas.

34 Butter is used in many ceremonies of the Tibetans and Lepchas; it serves also as material for making images, especially during the so-called "butter festival". Beautiful pictures (in colour) of such butter effigies, were published by J. F. Rock in his article 'Life among the lamas of Choni,' *The National Geographic Magazine*, Washington 1928, Plates I, V, IX, XIII, XV, XVI

35 The Tibetan *Sa bdag* or "earth owners" are a group of minor deities, which was taken over into Tibetan Buddhism from the Bon faith. They seem to correspond to the Sabdok moong of the Lepchas, who are believed to live

h [see CAT. 116, p. 76, - Analyd]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in rocks and when disturbed by men can afflict skin diseases. The same is believed in Tibet.

36 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II, p. 722
37 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 475—478 and Plate no 31
38 Compare Tucci, *ibidem* II, p.
39 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 350—351
40 Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, photograph facing p. 130 and description pp. 128-133
41 For this and other information we are indebted to Mr. Nyima, former official of the Tibetan Government.
42 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, p. 351

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower
(Die Legende vom Turmbau der Lepcha)

ODD

by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

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6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

Anthropos. Volume 48 (1953)

/889/ The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower

By René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

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1. First Version
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3. Explanations
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114 Part of the legendary material of the peoples living in the maharajah state of Sikkim at the foot of the Central Himalayas has already been treated by various people, and also a number of traditions of the Lepchas—the largest group of the original inhabitants of this territory—have been mentioned in numerous publications. (1)

1. Cf. Kali Kumar Das, "The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell," Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) Volume VI (1896). —C. de Beauvoir-Stocks, "Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikkim," Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21 (1925). — G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London, 1938). — J. Morris, Living with Lepchas (London, 1938).

114 Singularly enough, however, one of the legends best known among
113 the Lepchas has not received—with the exception of two brief references—closer treatment in any of the pertinent works that have appeared to date: this is a tradition that tells of the unsuccessful project of the Lepcha people to construct a tower of clay pots reaching the vault of heaven.

172 One of the reasons for the survival of this legend is the circum-
114 stance that at the supposed site of the tower potsherds have been dug

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the
172 fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

/Lepcha text follows./ (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

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filled with young Lepchas. At that time they decided to do the following: "We will build a tower in order to climb up to the sky and to pull it down with a hook"; this they had decided. Then they made the decision to pile small clay pots one upon the other [and in this way to build a tower]. The place they chose was the plain of Ta-lom. Here, in order to carry out the work, they divided all the people into three groups: first, a group who formed the pots from crushed earth; second, [a group] of bearers; and third, those who placed the pots in layers; thus they were divided.

Now they heaped the vessels one upon the other and, placing them in layers, they almost reached the sky; at this time they already saw the sky very near; those who were working on top—when they caught sight of the sky so close at hand—thought: "If we had a forked stick, then we could pull down the sky." Then they called down to those who were below: "Hand us a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those down below understood: "Tear down, knock down!" Those working at the top of the tower then called again: "Hand up a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those below once again understood: "Tear down!" Now those working below cried: "Shall we tear it down?" Then those above cried out in anger: "Yes, tear down! Tear down!"

So those who were down below now got hammers, axes, and clubs and began to shatter the vessels at the base. When they had already made good progress in their work, the tower suddenly came tumbling down, crushing everything. Those who had climbed up to the top as well as those who had worked close to the foot of the tower were all killed by the clay pots falling upon them. Those who survived could, however, no longer communicate with each other.

But to construct a tower like this, no one was capable formerly except the Lepchas; and the experienced men who could teach such work, these were Lepchas. Up until that time they had all spoken the same language, but now, since they could no longer understand one another, they parted ways. Some of them went up [to the north], some down [to the south]; others to the east and some to the west. As a result of this separation they settled the entire world, and thus there arose the numerous peoples and tribes existing today. —The place to which [the Lepchas] descended from the glacier mountain after their creation, lies in present-day Sikkim, and it is a plain upon which a great rice field is now located.

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 614 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

114 614 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly publications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 539 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

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this tribe is situated in Sikkim, close to the confluence of the Raman and the Lingkhim Khola, within the realm of the Daramdin Estate. The ancestors of the Na ong, created inside the earth, emerged here from a gigantic hollowed boulder, which one could still see on the bank of the Raman a generation ago. (6)

6. During the heavy rains of the year 1899 this boulder was dragged deeper into the river bed where it is finally supposed to have sunk in the sand.

After their arrival on the surface of the earth the Na ong settled down at the place called Phugamdin, which today lies in the north-eastern part of the great rice field belonging to the Daramdin estate. /893/ — One day they became aware of the vault of heaven spreading above their heads, and since they thought that it was very low, they decided to build a tower of pots in order to reach the sky.* — Since all the members of the tribe declared themselves in agreement with this plan, they immediately began to carry it out. The foundation of the tower was erected on the level surface of the present day Daramdin Field. The work progressed rapidly, and the building finally became so high that only two or three pots were still needed in order to complete the work. Because of this, the men working at the top of the tower became very excited. They called down to the helpers working below to hand up the required number of pots quickly. Now the command was passed down from man to man through the long chain of helpers, and when it finally reached the workers at the foot of the tower, its sense was already completely distorted; for now they understood it to mean that the tower was no longer necessary and should be torn down because the men standing at the top had already reached the sky. The men, women and children on the ground therefore proceeded to smash the lowest pots and as a result the entire construction collapsed with a terrible roar, burying beneath it all the members of the tribe. During its fall the tower broke into three great pieces, one of which fell on the mountain called Kaijalia within the limits of the present day Karmi estate, while a second portion of the tower plunged onto the Maney Hill in the precincts of the Relling estate, and the third piece finally came down near the village of Phedap, in the Nepalese district of Ilam. By the impact the above-mentioned mountains were pressed in to such an extent that today they show a clear saddle form.

113 Only a single man escaped from the disaster alive. Frightened
539 by what had happened and fearing the wrath of the divinity, which in his opinion had brought about the annihilation of the members of his tribe, he determined to leave the place of misfortune and to seek an abode in Nepalese territory.

Therefore he went to the village of Phedap, where he married one of the girls of this place. In the course of time once again a tribe was formed from his numerous descendants. It likewise was designated as Na ong. But this generation of the Na ong also didn't prove to be much smarter than its ancestors.

[778] One day the Na ong decided to kill the fish in the sacred river Mai-khola, which flows near the village of Phedap. This river was regarded as the seat of a mighty divinity, to whom at one time thousands of animals were sacrificed once a year by the local Nepalese population. The blood of these animals colored the stream red for days.

The Na ong thought now that the local millet beer, called marwa, was probably the best poison to kill the fish; since it could make a strong man drunk, it was surely well-suited to destroy all the fish living in this river. Therefore they poured /894/ huge quantities of millet beer into the stream, but the divinity of the river, enraged by this sacrilege, killed the entire tribe on the spot. Only a boy and an old woman escaped annihilation.

The woman took care of the boy, and when he had finally grown to manhood, he married, (7) and his descendants again lived in the

7. Tradition does not tell to what tribe his wife belonged.

village Phedap. But the tribe never again flourished — a fact ascribed to the displeasure of the river god who, despite all the sacrifices offered to it by subsequent generations of the Na ong, would not be pacified. When finally only a few Na ong were alive, about sixty years ago, one of them named Kaipal decided to leave the settlement on the banks of the Mai-khola and move with his family near the place where his ancestors had once built the tower; for here — so he thought — the remainder of the tribe would escape the wrath of the river god and, under the protection of the ancestral spirits, would again increase in number. His son Karandal, the transmitter of this legend, later married a Limbu girl from the Malboma sib in the new

113 539 dwelling place; this marriage produced four sons and three daughters, who, however, were apparently absorbed in the families of the neighboring Limbu. Thus the tribe of Na ong was finally completely extinguished.

113 The place where, according to the legend, the construction of the tower was undertaken is a plateau about two kilometers square situated in the western part of Sikkim, near the Indian-Nepalese border. To the west it is screened by a chain of mountains; to the south and the northeast it is bounded by two rivers. In the deeply fissured landscape of the Himalayan foothills a level plain of such proportions is a great rarity, and hence the plateau is clearly visible from a distance. It was subsequently transformed almost completely into a rice field, and only its extreme eastern corner, which bears the name Phugamdin and where — according to the legend — the first settlement of the Na ong arose, is uncultivated and today serves as a burial place for the Limbus, who recently settled in this part of Sikkim. (8)

8. A scholarly work on the burial methods of the Limbus — as well as an exhaustive investigation of this tribe — has unfortunately not yet been written. According to reports available up to now, the Limbu dead are generally buried, but sometimes cremated. Without doubt, however, the potsherds discovered in Daramdin cannot be grave-goods of the Limbus, for the Lepchas, who are sufficiently aware of the customs of this neighboring tribe — would in this case have ascribed no special significance to such findings.

172 While people are farming on the plateau — especially during the spring plowing — potsherds are constantly discovered; understandably enough, these findings are connected by the local inhabitants to the legend of the tower. Despite repeated questioning I still have not yet succeeded in obtaining some of the findings for closer examination; apparently the unearthed fragments are heedlessly thrown away by the populace.

/895/ The conditions which prevail at present in the Tibetan-Indian border region make it impossible, for the time being, to undertake any extensive investigation on the spot, and particularly any systematic excavations. I must therefore limit myself here to the observation that, according to the statement of the local inhabitants,

172 the fragments reveal a clearly convex shape and seem to come from uncommonly strong pots made of baked clay. Until now I have been unable to determine whether other objects such as bones, tools, weapons, etc. are occasionally also found along with the fragments.

3. Explanations

173 In conclusion, after a short summary, I should like to attempt a
172 few explanations of what has been said above. —The stories that occur among many peoples of the world dealing with the Flood and the building of a tower reaching to the sky also belong to the oldest and most strongly rooted traditions of the Lepchas. The current version of the legend of the tower building places the site on the plateau of Laramdin. As a proof, so to speak, of the correctness of this tradition, it is cited that right up to the present day the fragments of the pots from which the tower supposedly was built can be found here. Yet it seems questionable to me whether the doubtlessly very old tower legend was always brought into connection with the discoveries made in Daramdin. I suspect rather that the first potsherd discoveries were made in the course of the more intensive farming carried out in this region during the last hundred years; these soon brought about a corresponding variation of the legend. Supporting this assumption is a remark contained in G. B. Mainwaring's A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), one of the oldest publications about the Lepchas. The relevant passage, found on page XX of the Introduction, states: "On the top of the lofty Sung li hlo, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas (Na ong), now extinct, endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rocks and blocks of stones as the ruins are shown on the place."

As is evident, in this version of the legend, written down more than seven decades ago, neither the plateau of Daramdin nor the use of clay pots is mentioned, and the place of the action is moved to the mountain Sung li hlo in the vicinity of Darjeeling.

172 It will be possible to give an absolutely sound explanation of the type and date of the discovered vessel fragments only after an intensive investigation of a large number of the findings. Possibly the potsherds stem from an early settlement that later was lost to oblivion. —The protected plateau would have offered a very favorable spot for such a settlement. Likewise it would not be out of the question that these settlers were Lepcha sibs or a people closely related to them, who used clay vessels as household objects.

114 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the
323 assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other
[437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas.
[415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyŏk generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave
764 goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

172 degree of baking between a reddish brown and gray black in color. The pieces come from vessels of the most varied sizes: from small, thin walled bowls with a flared edge as well as also from larger containers with a wall several centimeters thick. Possibly the findings stem from various strata, for in part of them we are dealing with fragments of vessels prepared with the aid of a potter's wheel, whereas others are remnants of crude, thick-walled pots shaped by hand. /897/ By far the greater number of the findings reveal no ornamentation at all. Only on a few pieces there are three stripes of a dark color which run horizontally on the outer edge of the mouth of the vessel; one small item shows a vague, uncolored, serrated pattern [Wolfszahnmuster] that was scratched into the surface.

Concerning the settlement of the Daramdim Plateau I was also able to obtain a little information from the members of the Limbu people who live in this region. According to them, Limbu farmers cleared at the beginning of the nineteenth century the virgin forest that covered great portions of this high plateau. In the course of this work they ran across a ruined stone tower which they carried away in order to make room for a field. —It seems here to be a question of one of the old stone watchtowers, a few of which even today are still standing in this part of the Nepalese-Tibetan border region. They are possibly fortifications from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

The local Limbus assert further that even in the valleys of the two rivers bordering the Daramdin estate potsherds are frequently found washed down there from the plateau by the rain.

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz AK5 Lepcha

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Die Legende vom Turmbau der Lepcha

Von René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

Inhalt:

1. Erste Version
2. Zweite Version
3. Erklärungen
4. Nachtrag

Ein Teil des Sagengutes der im Maharajatum von Sikkim, am Fuße des Zentralen Himalaya lebenden Völkerschaften ist bereits verschiedentlich behandelt worden, und auch eine Anzahl von Überlieferungen der Lepcha, der größten Gruppe der Ureinwohner dieses Gebietes, fand in mehreren Veröffentlichungen Erwähnung [1]. Eigenartigerweise hat jedoch eine der unter den Lepcha am besten bekannten Legenden — mit Ausnahme zweier kurzer Hinweise — in keiner der bisher erschienenen einschlägigen Arbeiten eine nähere Behandlung erfahren: Es ist dies eine Überlieferung, die von dem mißglückten Vorhaben des Lepcha-Volkes, einen bis an das Himmelsgewölbe emporreichenden Turm aus Tontöpfen zu bauen, berichtet.

Einer der Gründe für das Fortleben dieser Legende ist der Umstand, daß an der Stätte des angeblichen Turmbaues von der hier ansässigen Bevölkerung bei Feldarbeiten von Zeit zu Zeit Tonscherben ausgegraben werden. Die Funde erregten bereits vor zwei Jahrzehnten die Aufmerksamkeit eines Fachmannes; Sir Charles Bell, der damalige Political Officer of Sikkim, ließ sich einige der aufgefundenen Scherben vorlegen, und auf seine Weisung wurde auch die Turmbau-Legende schriftlich festgehalten. Leider gelangte jedoch dieses Material nicht zur Auswertung. — Durch das Entgegenkommen von Sri T. N. Pulger, dem Besitzer des Daramdin-Gutes, innerhalb dessen Grenzen der Ort des legendären Turmbaues heute liegt, konnte ich eine Wiedergabe des seinerzeit für Sir Charles Bell abgefaßten Berichtes erhalten und in vorliegender Arbeit mit verwerten.

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[1] Cf. Kali Kumar Das: The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell. Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) 6. 1896. — C. de Beauvoir-Stocks: Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikhim. Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21. 1925. — G. Gorer: Himalayan Village. London 1938. — J. Morris: Living with Lepchas. London 1938.

[p. 889]

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz AK5 Lepcha

1. Erste Version

Die meisten Lepcha, denen die Legende vom Turmbau bekannt ist, sind der Überzeugung, daß dieses Werk von den Urahnen des Lepcha-Volkes ausgeführt wurde. Diese Ansicht kommt auch in dem hier nachfolgend in orthographischer Umschrift wiedergegebenen und übersetzten Lepcha-Text zum Ausdruck.

Ta-lom pŭr-tam să sŭng[2]

a'Ya a-a'yit ka mu-tŭn-tsi róng-kŭp-song chu-bi lom a'yit-lŭng chhŭl bát-lŭng yŭ-mă/ ne-mă-yel lyang a-re-pong gŭn róng-kŭp-song nŭn blen-mă/ o-tha hŭ-yu-do să nóng-ka a-lom krut-mat-mă/ kă-yu-pong tă-lyang hryóm-ban hrón ŭn huk-ban hrya-ka yong krut-mat-mă/ krut a-re thep-lŭng hŭ-yu-pong ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók tsŭk-shong krut-mat-mă// Lyang o-re hŭ-yu thit-bu re ta-lom pŭr-tam gŭm/ o-ba hŭ-yu-pong a-sher sam mat-ban a'yuk dzuk-shong nŭm-shi-myu rit-mă/ kat-re ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók bŭk-bu a-sher nyet-re shel-bu ŭn a-sher sam-bu re ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók tsŭk-bu tsŭk-shong cha ngun-mă// A-long hŭ-yu-pong ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók tsŭk-bu cha tsŭk-mă/ tsŭk-bu a-tyet a-tho cha tsŭk-mă kam-pă-chak tal tă-lyang cha khyá-la non-mă/ o-tyet ka hŭ-yu-pong tă-lyang a-thól shi-mă/ a-re shi-lŭng tă-ba bam-bu-song nŭn tsing-mă kók-vím nyi-gong tá tă-lyang huk-shong-re/ tă-ba bam-bu-song nŭn a-bóng-ka bam-bu-song rem cha-lik-mă/ kók-vím tal kă-yu-pong tă-lyang huk-sho/ me-ba hŭ-yu-nŭn chek-tel-la chek-la yong thyo-mă/ tă-ba hŭ-yu nŭn dŭ-lik-mă kók-vím yang-tal kă-yu-pong tă-lyang huk-sho/ me-ba bam-bu-song cha-da thyo-mă chek-tel-la/ tă-ba bam-bu-song rem cha vyet mă chek-yóng á/ tă-ba hŭ-yu-nŭn lă sak-lyak nam-ka chek-tel-la chek-tel-la yong li-bi-mă// Me-ba hŭ-yu-pong tho pryit ŭn tŭng-gel bŭ-lŭng a-bóng-ka ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók cha-gram-mă/ me-ba a-bóng bam-bu-song nŭn chek-tel-lel tet-ka cha-rom-ban glu-mă/ tă-ba hron-bu-pong ŭn a-bóng pun-ka bam-bu-pong gŭn ʃat-ʃyŭ-tyók thop-ban mak-non-mă/ a-long me-ba bam-bu-pong lă a-ring a-bóng kat-na kat să cha-ko mă-khŭn ŭn ring pat mă-khŭn ngun-non-mă/ a-re să nă-han a-lom tsŭk-bu tsŭk-kŭng róng-song lyót tu-la mă-nyin-ne/ gŭn-len nă-han a-lom gyu-tsen a'yuk lóng-ten-bu róng-kŭp-song do gŭm/ tă-tsát o-tyet song-te gŭn-pong a-ring a-bóng kă-ta gŭm/ hŭ-yu să byek-ka a-ring cha-pat mă-khŭn ne a-long hŭ-yu-pong bret-mă/ hŭ-yu bam-bu-pong a-flik thŭl a-flik tshŭl tsŭk-lat ŭn tsŭk-kyer kon bret-nóng-mă/ a-re hŭ-yu-pong bret-bu lom tyáng sŭk-dŭm ka blen-mă/ a-lo-ba o-re lom mi-git mi-git să dung-git ngun-mă/ a-re gŭn-pong thŭl chu-bi lom a'yit-lŭng yŭt-bu ŭn sŭk-dŭm ka blen-bu gŭm/ lyang o-re a-lo-ba thŭl gren-jóng lyang-ka nyi-mă//

Die Geschichte der Ta-lom-Ebene

In lang vergangener Zeit, als die Schöpfung der Welt vollzogen wurde, stieg das Lepcha-Volk nach seiner Erschaffung, an Zahl anwachsend, von

[2] Der Text wurde mit liebenswürdiger Hilfe von Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong) übersetzt.

dem Gletscherberg herab[5], und das Land von Ma-yel[6] füllte sich mit jungen Lepcha. Zu jener Zeit beschlossen sie, folgendes auszuführen: „Wir wollen einen Turm bauen, um zu dem Himmel emporzuklettern und ihn mit einem Haken herabzuziehen"; dies hatten sie beraten. Sodann faßten sie den Beschluß, kleine Tontöpfe aufeinanderzustapeln [und auf diese Weise einen Turm zu bauen]. Der Ort, den sie auswählten, war die Ebene von Ta-lom. Hier, um die Arbeit zu verrichten, teilten sie alle Leute in drei Gruppen ein: erstens eine Gruppe, die aus gestampfter Erde die Töpfe formte, zweitens [eine Gruppe] der Träger, und drittens diejenigen, welche die Töpfe in Schichten legten; so wurden sie eingeteilt.

Sie stapelten nun die Töpfe aufeinander und, sie in Schichten legend, erreichten sie nahezu den Himmel; zu dieser Zeit sahen sie den Himmel bereits sehr nahe. Diejenigen, die oben arbeiteten — als sie den Himmel so nahe erblickten —, dachten: „Wenn wir einen gewinkelten Ast hätten, dann könnten wir den Himmel herabziehen." Da riefen sie von oben den unten Befindlichen zu: „Reicht uns einen gewinkelten Ast, wir wollen den Himmel herabziehen!" Die unten aber hörten: „Reißt ein, schlagt um!" Die an der Spitze des Turmes Arbeitenden riefen nun erneut: „Reicht doch einen gewinkelten Ast empor, wir wollen den Himmel herabziehen!" Aber die unten hörten wiederum: „Reißt ein!" Nun riefen die unten Arbeitenden: „Sollen wir einreißen?" Da schrien die oben in Ärger: „Ja, reißt ein, reißt ein!"

So holten nun die unten Befindlichen Hämmer, Äxte und Keulen und begannen, die untersten Töpfe zu zerschlagen. Als sie mit ihrer Arbeit schon weit fortgeschritten waren, da kam der Turm plötzlich, alles zerschmetternd, herabgestürzt. Diejenigen, die nach oben geklettert waren, und auch die, welche nahe dem Fuße des Turmes gearbeitet hatten, wurden alle durch die auf sie fallenden Lehmtöpfe erschlagen. Die am Leben Gebliebenen konnten sich aber nicht mehr untereinander verständigen.

Doch einen Turm wie diesen zu errichten, war früher niemand fähig als nur die Lepcha und die erfahrenen Männer, die eine solche Arbeit lehren konnten, diese waren Lepcha. Bis zu jener Zeit sprachen sie alle die gleiche Sprache, doch nun, da sie sich nicht mehr verständigen konnten, schieden sie voneinander. Einige von ihnen gingen aufwärts [gegen Norden], einige abwärts [nach Süden], andere in östlicher und manche in westlicher Richtung. Infolge dieser Teilung besiedelten sie die ganze Welt, und so entstanden die heute bestehenden zahlreichen Völker und Stämme. — Der Ort, zu dem [die Lepcha] nach ihrer Erschaffung vom Gletscherberg herabstiegen, liegt im heutigen Sikkim, und es ist dies eine Ebene, auf der sich nunmehr ein großes Reis-Feld befindet.

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[5] Der Sage nach nahm das Lepcha-Volk seinen Ursprung von dem Berge Kanchenjunga, aus dessen Gletscherein das Ahnenpaar der Lepcha erschaffen worden sein soll.

[6] Über das Land von Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz AK5 Lepcha

2. Zweite Version

Eine andere Version der Turmbau-Legende, die Anspruch auf größere Genauigkeit erhebt, besagt, daß die Errichtung des Turmes nicht von den Ahnen der Lepcha, sondern von einer zum Lepcha-Volke gehörigen Sippe vorgenommen wurde, die den Namen *Na ong* trug. Im heutigen Lepcha hat das Wort *Na ong* die Bedeutung von „Dummkopf", wobei es allerdings wahrscheinlich ist, daß es seinen derogativen Sinn erst späterhin durch die Assoziierung des Sippennamens *Na ong* mit der Überlieferung von dem unsinnigen, mißglückten Turmbau erlangte. Neben dem Worte *Na ong* wird auch mitunter der Ausdruck *Chelichchom* zur Bezeichnung dieser Sippe verwendet; letzteres Wort scheint aus der Sprache der Limbu, eines den Lepcha verwandten Volkes, zu kommen und würde somit die unter den Limbu anzutreffende Ansicht bestärken, daß die sogenannten Na ong oder Chelickchom nicht Lepcha, sondern Limbu waren.

Die Chronik der Maharajas von Sikkim — in der die Na ong in der Aufzählung der Lepcha-Sippschaften angeführt sind — als auch die wenigen wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen, die den Namen *Na ong* erwähnen [5], berichten übereinstimmend, daß diese Sippe schon vor langer Zeit ausgestorben sei. Diese Behauptung entspricht allerdings nicht ganz der Wahrheit, denn noch zu Beginn dieses Jahrhunderts lebte in der Nähe der Stelle, an der einst der Turm errichtet worden sein soll, eine Familie, deren Angehörige sich als letzte Nachkommen des Na ong-Stammes — sie gebrauchten bei der Eigenbezeichnung den Ausdruck „Stamm" — betrachteten. Das Haupt dieser Familie, ein Mann namens Karandal, scheint jedoch der einzige gewesen zu sein, der die Überlieferungen der Na ong noch gut kannte, und er war es daher, der seinerzeit die entsprechenden Auskünfte für den an Sir Charles Bell weitergeleiteten Bericht gab. Den Mitteilungen des letzten Bewahrers der Na ong-Überlieferungen entsprechend, verliefen der Turmbau und die weitere Geschichte des Stammes wie folgt:

Es geschah in grauer Vorzeit, daß der Stamm der Na ong zur Welt kam. Die Stelle, die angeblich zur Geburtsstätte dieses Stammes wurde, liegt in Sikkim, nahe dem Zusammenfluß des Raman und des Lingkhim Khola, innerhalb des Bereiches des Daramdin-Gutes. Die Ahnen der Na ong, im Erdinneren erschaffen, kamen hier aus einem riesigen, ausgehöhlten Felsblock hervor, der noch vor einer Generation am Ufer des Raman zu sehen war [6].

Nach ihrem Eintreffen an der Erdoberfläche ließen sich die Na ong an dem als Phugamdin bezeichneten Orte nieder, der heute im nordöstlichen Teil des großen, zu den Besitzungen von Daramdin gehörenden Reisfeldes

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[5] Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5. — G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language. Calcutta 1876, p. XX. — G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language. Berlin 1898, p. 189b. — de Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

[6] Während der schweren Regenfälle des Jahres 1899 wurde dieser Felsblock tiefer in das Flußbett gerissen, wo er schließlich im Sande versunken sein soll.

liegt. — Eines Tages wurden sie des sich über ihren Köpfen ausbreitenden Himmelsgewölbes gewahr, und da sie meinten, daß dieses sehr niedrig sei, beschlossen sie, einen Turm aus Töpfen zu bauen, um den Himmel zu erreichen. — Da alle Angehörigen des Stammes sich mit diesem Vorhaben einverstanden erklärten, wurde sogleich mit seiner Ausführung begonnen, wobei das Fundament des Turmes auf der ebenen Fläche des heutigen Daramdin-Feldes errichtet wurde. Die Arbeit ging schnell vor sich, und der Bau wurde schließlich so hoch, daß nur noch zwei, drei Töpfe benötigt wurden, um das Werk zu vollenden. Darüber gerieten die am Gipfel des Turmes Arbeitenden in große Aufregung, und so riefen sie ihren unten arbeitenden Helfern zu, sie möchten schnell die benötigte Anzahl von Töpfen emporreichen. Der Befehl wurde nun durch die lange Kette der Helfer von Mann zu Mann weitergegeben, und als er schließlich bei den am Fuße des Turmes Arbeitenden anlangte, war sein Sinn bereits gänzlich entstellt; denn nun hieß es, der Turm würde nicht mehr benötigt und sollte eingerissen werden, weil die an seiner Spitze Stehenden bereits den Himmel erreicht hätten. Die zu ebener Erde befindlichen Männer, Frauen und Kinder gingen daher daran, die untersten Töpfe zu zerschlagen, was alsbald zur Folge hatte, daß das gesamte Bauwerk unter fürchterlichem Getöse einstürzte, alle Angehörigen des Stammes unter sich begrabend. Während des Sturzes zerbrach der Turm in drei große Teile, von denen einer auf den als Kaijalia bezeichneten Berg, innerhalb der Grenzen des heutigen Karmi-Gutes, fiel, während ein zweiter Teil des Turmes auf den Maney-Hügel im Bereiche des Relling-Besitzes stürzte und das dritte Stück schließlich in der Nähe des im nepalesischen Bezirk von Ilam gelegenen Dorfes Phedap niederging. Durch den Anprall wurden die genannten Berge stark eingedrückt, so daß sie heute eine deutliche Sattelform aufweisen.

Nur ein einziger Mann kam bei dem Unglück mit dem Leben davon. Erschreckt durch das Geschehene und den Zorn der Gottheit fürchtend, die seiner Ansicht nach die Vernichtung seiner Stammesgenossen herbeiführte, beschloß er, den Ort des Unglücks zu verlassen und auf nepalesischem Gebiet eine Bleibe zu suchen.

Er zog deshalb in das Dorf Phedap, wo er eines der Mädchen dieser Ortschaft heiratete. Im Laufe der Zeit bildete sich aus seinen zahlreichen Nachkommen erneut ein Stamm, der gleichfalls die Bezeichnung Na ong führte. Doch auch diese Generation der Na ong erwies sich als nicht viel klüger als ihre Vorfahren.

Eines Tages beschlossen die Na ong, die Fische in dem geheiligten Fluß Mai-khola, der in der Nähe des Ortes Phedap vorbeifließt, zu töten. Dieser Fluß wurde als der Sitz einer mächtigen Gottheit angesehen, der einst von der örtlichen nepalesischen Bevölkerung einmal jährlich Tausende von Tieren geopfert wurden, deren Blut den Strom für Tage rot färbte.

Die Na ong meinten nun, daß das einheimische Hirse-Bier, *marwa* genannt, wohl das beste Gift sei, um die Fische zu töten; denn wenn es einen starken Mann betrunken machen könne, so sei es sicherlich gut geeignet, alle in diesem Flusse lebenden Fische zu vertilgen. Sie gossen daher unge-

heure Mengen von Hirse-Bier in den Strom, doch die Gottheit des Flusses, erzürnt durch diesen Frevel, tötete auf der Stelle den gesamten Stamm. Nur ein Knabe und eine alte Frau entgingen der Vernichtung.

Die Frau nahm sich des Knaben an, und als er schließlich zum Manne gereift war, heiratete er [7], und seine Nachkommen lebten wiederum im Dorfe Phedap. Doch der Stamm gelangte nie wieder zur Blüte, was dem Unwillen der Flußgottheit zugeschrieben wurde, die trotz der ihr von späteren Generationen der Na ong dargebrachten Opfer sich nicht mehr besänftigen ließ. Als schließlich nur mehr wenige der Na ong am Leben waren, beschloß vor etwa 60 Jahren einer von ihnen, Kaipal genannt, die Siedlung am Ufer des Mai-khola zu verlassen und mit seiner Familie in die Nähe des Ortes zu ziehen, wo seine Urahnen einst den Turm bauten; denn hier — so meinte er — würde der Rest des Stammes dem Zorn der Flußgottheit entgehen und unter dem Schutze der Ahnengeister erneut an Zahl gewinnen. Sein Sohn Karandal, der Überlieferer dieser Legende, heiratete späterhin an der neu bezogenen Wohnstätte ein Limbu-Mädchen aus der Sippe der Nalboma; dieser Ehe entsprossen vier Söhne und drei Töchter, die jedoch offenbar in den Familien der benachbarten Limbu aufgingen, womit der Stamm der Na ong wohl nunmehr endgültig zum Erlöschen kam.

Der Ort, an welchem der Legende nach der Bau des Turmes vorgenommen wurde, ist ein etwa 2 km² großes Plateau, das im westlichen Teil Sikkims, nahe der indisch-nepalesischen Grenze, liegt. Im Westen wird es von einer Bergkette abgeschirmt, während zwei Flüsse es nach dem Süden und dem Nordosten abgrenzen. In der tief zerklüfteten Landschaft der Vorgebirge des Himalaya ist eine ebene Fläche von solchem Ausmaß eine große Seltenheit, und das Plateau ist daher von weitem gut sichtbar. Es wurde nunmehr fast zur Gänze in ein Reisfeld verwandelt, und nur seine äußerste östliche Ecke, die den Namen Phugamdin trägt und wo der Sage nach die erste Siedlung der Na ong entstand, ist unbebaut und dient heute den Limbu, die in neuerer Zeit in diesem Teil Sikkims ansässig wurden, als Bestattungsplatz [8].

Im Laufe der auf dem Plateau vorgenommenen Feldarbeiten, insbesondere während des im Frühjahr durchgeführten Umpflügens, werden immer wieder Tonscherben aufgefunden; verständlicherweise werden diese Funde von den Ortsansässigen mit der Turmbau-Legende in Zusammenhang gebracht. Trotz wiederholter Umfragen gelang es mir bis zum Augenblick noch nicht, einige der Funde zur näheren Untersuchung zu erhalten; es scheint, daß die ausgegrabenen Scherben von der Bevölkerung achtlos weggeworfen werden.

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[7] Die Überlieferung teilt nicht mit, welchem Stamme seine Frau angehörte.

[8] Eine wissenschaftliche Beschreibung der Begräbnisarten der Limbu — wie eine eingehende Untersuchung dieses Stammes überhaupt — steht leider noch aus. Den bisher vorliegenden Berichten nach werden die Toten bei den Limbu meist begraben, mitunter jedoch auch verbrannt. Zweifellos können aber die in Daramdin aufgefundenen Scherben nicht von Grabbeigaben der Limbu herrühren, denn die Lepcha — die über die Gebräuche dieses Nachbarstammes genügend unterrichtet sind — hätten in diesem Falle den Funden keine besondere Bedeutung beigemessen.

Die im tibetisch-indischen Grenzgebiet gegenwärtig herrschenden Verhältnisse machen es vorläufig unmöglich, eine länger währende Untersuchung an Ort und Stelle, und insbesondere systematische Grabungen vorzunehmen. Ich muß mich hier daher auf die Mitteilung beschränken, daß nach Aussage der Ortsansässigen die Scherben eine deutlich gewölbte Form aufweisen und von ungewöhnlich starken, aus gebranntem Ton hergestellten Töpfen herzurühren scheinen. Ob neben Scherben vielleicht auch manchmal andere Gegenstände wie Knochen, Geräte, Waffen etc. aufgefunden werden, konnte ich bisher nicht in Erfahrung bringen.

3. Erklärungen

Abschließend möchte ich nach einer kurzen Zusammenfassung versuchen, einige Erklärungen zu dem vorher Gesagten zu geben. — Die bei vielen Völkern der Welt vorzufindenden Erzählungen von der Sintflut und dem Bau eines bis zum Himmel reichenden Turmes gehören zu den ältesten und am stärksten verwurzelten Überlieferungen auch der Lepcha. Die gegenwärtig im Umlauf befindliche Fassung der Turmbau-Legende verlegt den Ort des Geschehens auf das Plateau von Daramdin, wobei sozusagen als Beweis der Richtigkeit dieser Überlieferung mit angeführt wird, daß noch bis zum heutigen Tage die Scherben der Töpfe, aus denen der Turm gebaut worden sein soll, hier auffindbar sind. Es erscheint mir jedoch fraglich, ob die zweifellos sehr alte Turmbau-Legende auch tatsächlich immer mit den in Daramdin gemachten Funden in Zusammenhang gebracht wurde. Ich vermute vielmehr, daß erst im Laufe der seit einem Jahrhundert in diesem Gebiete intensiver durchgeführten Feldarbeiten die ersten Scherben-Funde gemacht wurden, was alsbald eine entsprechende Abänderung der Legende zur Folge hatte. Einen Anhaltspunkt für diese Vermutung bietet eine Bemerkung, die in G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta 1876), einer der ältesten Veröffentlichungen über die Lepcha, enthalten ist. Die betreffende, auf p. XX der Einleitung enthaltene Mitteilung lautet: „On the top of the lofty Sung li hlō, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas (Na ong), now extinct, endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rock and blocks of stones as the ruins are shown on the place."

Wie ersichtlich, ist hier in der vor mehr als sieben Jahrzehnten aufgezeichneten Version der Legende weder das Plateau von Daramdin noch die Verwendung der Tontöpfe erwähnt, und der Ort der Handlung wird auf den in der Nähe von Darjeeling liegenden Berg Sung li hlo versetzt.

Eine stichhaltige Erklärung der Art und Datierung der aufgefundenen Gefäßstücke zu geben, wird erst nach eingehender Untersuchung einer größeren Anzahl der Funde abgegeben werden können. Möglicherweise rühren die Scherben von einer frühen, später in Vergessenheit geratenen Siedlung her, für deren Errichtung das geschützt liegende Plateau einen sehr günstigen Ort geboten hätte. Es wäre gleichfalls nicht ausgeschlossen, daß es sich bei diesen Siedlern um Sippschaften der Lepchas oder eine ihnen nahe verwandte Bevölkerung gehandelt hätte, die Tontöpfe als Gebrauchsgegenstände verwendete.

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz AK5 Lepcha

In diesem Zusammenhang muß ich allerdings eine Ergänzung der die Töpferei der Lepcha betreffenden Feststellung, die in G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London 1938, p. 67) zu finden ist, vornehmen. Wie in dem zitierten Werk angeführt wurde, besitzt die heute in der Reservation von Zongu lebende Generation der Lepcha keine Kenntnis der Töpferkunst, weshalb im Hausgebrauch Kupfer-, Messing- und Porzellantöpfe nepalesischen, chinesischen oder gar westlichen Ursprungs Verwendung finden; diese Aussage deckt sich mit den Beobachtungen, die ich bei einem Teil der außerhalb der Reservation lebenden Lepcha machte. Daneben konnte ich jedoch auch in Erfahrung bringen, daß noch vor zwei Generationen die Töpferkunst von einzelnen, in diesem Handwerk erfahrenen Männern ausgeübt wurde, die ihrerseits die übrigen Stammesangehörigen mit den Produkten ihrer Arbeit auf dem Tauschwege versorgten. Ihre Tätigkeit scheint allerdings auf die Herstellung einer Gefäßart beschränkt gewesen zu sein, die früher unter den Lepcha Verwendung fand. Diese, als *Tang ling fyŭ tyŏk* bezeichneten Gefäße waren zumeist henkellos, kurzhalsig und im untersten Drittel am stärksten vorgewölbt; an ihrer breitesten Stelle besaßen sie einen Durchmesser von etwa 30 cm. Sie wurde ohne Hilfe einer Töpferscheibe aus Ton geformt und anschließend gebrannt. Einzelne dieser Gefäße sollen noch an einigen entlegenen Stellen Sikkims in Verwendung sein.

Auch der Gedanke, daß die Scherben von Urnen oder Grabbeigaben herrühren könnten, ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen. Sollte diese Vermutung zutreffen, dann dürfte es sich allerdings bei den einstigen Siedlern kaum um Lepcha gehandelt haben, denn soweit auf Grund meiner Untersuchungen über die alten Bestattungsbräuche der Lepcha feststellbar ist, war das Verbrennen der Toten und eine Beisetzung der Asche in Urnen oder die Sitte der Beigabe von Töpfen mit Nahrung in das Grab bei den Lepcha nicht üblich [9].

4. Nachtrag

Bereits kurz nach Drucklegung dieser Arbeit gelang es mir, einige der im Gebiet von Daramdin aufgefundenen Topfstücke zu erhalten. In der Mehrzahl handelt es sich um kleine Scherben mit bereits stark abgerundeten Bruchseiten, aus mit Glimmer durchsetztem Ton bestehend, der je nach dem Grad der Brennung in der Farbe zwischen rötlichem Braun und Grauschwarz schwankt. Die Stücke rühren von Gefäßen verschiedenster Größe her, von dünnwandigen kleinen Schalen mit nach außen umgebogenem Rand als auch von größeren Behältern mit einer Wandstärke von mehreren Zentimetern. Möglicherweise entstammen die Funde verschiedenen Siedlungsschichten; denn bei einem Teil handelt es sich um Bruchstücke von Gefäßen, die mit Hilfe einer Töpferscheibe angefertigt wurden, während andere der Scherben Reste von dickwandigen grobförmigen Töpfen sind, die mit der Hand geformt

[9] Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, Ancient Funeral Ceremonies of the Lepchas. Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow) 5. 1951.

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz AK5 Lepcha

worden waren. Die weitaus größere Zahl der Funde zeigt keinerlei Verzierungen, und nur auf einigen wenigen Stücken sind drei dunkelfarbige, horizontal an der Außenseite des Gefäßmundes verlaufende Streifen bemerkbar, während ein einziges kleines Stück ein nur schlecht sichtbares eingeritztes und ungefärbtes Wolfszahnmuster aufweist.

Über die Besiedlung des Daramdin-Plateaus konnte ich auch noch einige Angaben von den in diesem Gebiet lebenden Angehörigen des Limbu-Volkes bekommen. Ihrer Behauptung nach haben Limbu-Ackerbauer zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts den Urwald gerodet, der weite Teile dieser Hochebene bedeckte, und bei diesen Arbeiten stießen sie auf einen verfallenen Steinturm, den sie abtrugen, um Platz für ein Feld zu schaffen. — Es scheint sich um einen der alten steinernen Wachttürme gehandelt zu haben, von denen heute noch einige in diesem Teil des nepalesisch-tibetischen Grenzgebietes stehen, und die möglicherweise Befestigungen aus der Zeit des Großtibetischen Reiches (9. Jh. n. Chr.) sind.

Die ortsansässigen Limbu behaupten weiters, daß auch in den Tälern der zwei das Gebiet von Daramdin begrenzenden Flüsse öfters Topfscherben zu finden sind, die dorthin von dem höhergelegenen Plateau her vom Regen herabgeschwemmt werden.

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HIMALAYAN JOURNALS;

OR,

NOTES OF A NATURALIST

IN BENGAL, THE SIKKIM AND NEPAL HIMALAYAS,
THE KHASIA MOUNTAINS, &c.

BY JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER, M.D., R.N., F.R.S.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

[title page]

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CHAPTER V.

View from Mr. Hodgson's of range of snowy mountains—Their extent and elevation—Delusive appearance of elevation—Sinchul, view from and vegetation of—Chumulari—Magnolias, white and purple—Rhododendron Dalhousiæ, arboreum and argenteum—Natives of Dorjiling—Lepchas, origin, tradition of flood, morals, dress, arms, ornaments, diet—cups, origin and value—Marriages—Diseases—Burial—Worship and religion—Bijoons—Kampa Rong, or Arratt—Limboos, origin, habits, language, &c.—Moormis—Magras—Mechis—Comparison of customs with those of the natives of Assam, Khasia, &c.

133
114 THE summer, or rainy season of 1848, was passed at or near Dorjiling, during which period I chiefly occupied myself in forming collections, and in taking meteorological observations. I resided at Mr Hodgson's for the greater part of the time, in consequence of his having given me a hospitable invitation to consider his house my home. The view from his windows is one quite unparalleled for the scenery it embraces, commanding confessedly the grandest known landscape of snowy mountains in the Himalaya, and hence in the world.* Kinchinjunga (forty-five miles distant) is the prominent object, rising 21,000 feet above the level of the observer out of a sea of intervening wooded hills; whilst, on a line with its snows, the eye descends below the horizon, to a narrow gulf 7000 feet deep in the mountains, where the Great Rungeet, white with foam, threads a tropical forest with a silver line.

[p. 122]

* For an account of the geography of these regions, and the relation of the Sikkim Himalaya to Tibet, &c., see Appendix.

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To the north-west towards Nepal, the snowy peaks of 133
Kubra and Junnoo (respectively 24,005 feet and 25,312 feet) rise over the shoulder of Singalelah; whilst eastward the snowy mountains appear to form an unbroken range, trending north-east to the great mass of Donkia (23,176 feet) and thence south-east by the fingered peaks of Tunkola and the silver cone of Chola, (17,320 feet) gradually sinking into the Bhotan mountains at Gipmoochi (14,509 feet).

The most eloquent descriptions I have read fail to convey to my mind's eye the forms and colours of snowy mountains, or to my imagination the sensations and impressions that rivet my attention to these sublime phenomena when they are present in reality; and I shall not therefore obtrude any attempt of the kind upon my reader. The latter has probably seen the Swiss Alps, which, though barely possessing half the sublimity, extent, or height of the Himalaya, are yet far more beautiful. In either case he is struck with the precision and sharpness of their outlines, and still more with the wonderful play of colours on their snowy flanks, from the glowing hues reflected in orange, gold and ruby, from clouds illumined by the sinking or rising sun, to the ghastly pallor that succeeds with twilight, when the red seems to give place to its complementary colour green. Such dissolving-views elude all attempts at description, they are far too aërial to be chained to the memory, and fade from it so fast as to be gazed upon day after day, with undiminished admiration and pleasure, long after the mountains themselves have lost their sublimity and apparent height.

The actual extent of the snowy range seen from Mr. Hodgson's windows is comprised within an arc of 80° (from north 30° west to north 50° east), or nearly a quarter

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133 of the horizon, along which the perpetual snow forms an unbroken girdle or crest of frosted silver; and in winter, when the mountains are covered down to 8000 feet, this white ridge stretches uninterruptedly for more than 160°. No known view is to be compared with this in extent, when the proximity and height of the mountains are considered; for within the 80° above mentioned more than twelve peaks rise above 20,000 feet, and there are none below 15,000 feet, while Kinchin is 28,178, and seven others above 22,000. The nearest perpetual snow is on Nursing, a beautifully sharp conical peak 19,139 feet high, and thirty-two miles distant; the most remote mountain seen is Donkia, 23,176 feet high, and seventy-three miles distant; whilst Kinchin, which forms the principal mass both for height and bulk, is exactly forty-five miles distant.

On first viewing this glorious panorama, the impression produced on the imagination by their prodigious elevation is, that the peaks tower in the air and pierce the clouds, and such are the terms generally used in descriptions of similar alpine scenery; but the observer, if he look again, will find that even the most stupendous occupy a very low position on the horizon, the top of Kinchin itself measuring only 4° 31′ above the level of the observer! Donkia again, which is 23,176 feet above the sea, or about 15,700 above Mr. Hodgson's, rises only 1° 55′ above the horizon; an angle which is quite inappreciable to the eye, when unaided by instruments.*

This view may be extended a little by ascending Sinchul, which rises a thousand feet above the elevation of Mr. Hodgson's house, and is a few miles south-east of

* These are the apparent angles which I took from Mr. Hodgson's house (alt. 7500 feet) with an excellent theodolite, no deduction being made for refraction.

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Dorjiling: from its summit Chumulari (23,929 feet) is 133
seen to the north-east, at eighty-four miles distance, rearing its head as a great rounded mass over the snowy Chola range, out of which it appears to rise, although in reality lying forty miles beyond;—so deceptive is the perspective of snowy mountains. To the north-west again, at upwards of 100 miles distance, a beautiful group of snowy mountains rises above the black Singalelah range, the chief being, perhaps, as high as Kinchinjunga, from which it is fully eighty miles distant to the westward; and between them no mountain of considerable altitude intervenes; the Nepalese Himalaya in that direction sinking remarkably towards the Arun river, which there enters Nepal from Tibet.

The top of Sinchul is a favourite excursion from Dorjiling, being very easy of access, and the path abounding in rare and beautiful plants, and passing through magnificent forests of oak, magnolia, and rhododendron; while the summit, besides embracing this splendid view of the snowy range over the Dorjiling spur in the foreground, commands also the plains of India, with the courses of the Teesta, Mahanuddee, Balasun and Mechi rivers. In the months of 133
April and May, when the magnolias and rhododendrons are 137
in blossom, the gorgeous vegetation is, in some respects, not to be surpassed by anything in the tropics; but the effect is [132]
much marred by the prevailing gloom of the weather. The white-flowered magnolia (*M. excelsa*, Wall,) forms a predominant tree at 7000 to 8000 feet; and in 1848 it blossomed so profusely, that the forests on the broad flanks of Sinchul, and other mountains of that elevation, appeared as if sprinkled with snow. The purple-flowered kind again 137
(*M. Campbellii*) hardly occurs below 8000 feet, and forms an immense, but very ugly, black-barked, sparingly branched

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137 tree, leafless in winter and also during the flowering season, when it puts forth from the ends of its branches great rose-purple cup-shaped flowers, whose fleshy petals strew the ground. On its branches, and on those of oaks and laurels, *Rhododendron Dalhousiæ* grows epiphytically, a slender shrub, bearing from three to six white lemon-scented bells, four and a half inches long and as many broad, at the end of each branch. In the same woods the scarlet rhododendron (*R. arboreum*) is very scarce, and is outvied by the great *R. argenteum*, which grows as a tree forty feet high, with magnificent leaves twelve to fifteen inches long, deep green, wrinkled above and silvery below, while the flowers are as large as those of *R. Dalhousiæ*, and grow more in a cluster. I know nothing of the kind that exceeds in beauty the flowering branch of *R. argenteum*, with its wide spreading foliage and glorious mass of flowers.

Oaks, laurels, maples, birch, chesnut, hydrangea, a species of fig (which is found on the very summit), and three Chinese and Japanese genera, are the principal features of the forest; the common bushes being *Aucuba*, *Skimmia*, and the curious *Helwingia*, which bears little clusters of flowers on the centre of the leaf, like butcher's-broom. In spring immense broad-leaved arums spring up, with green or purple-striped hoods, that end in tail-like threads, eighteen inches long, which lie along the ground; and there are various kinds of *Convallaria*, *Paris*, *Begonia*, and other beautiful flowering herbs. Nearly thirty ferns may be gathered on this excursion, including many of great beauty and rarity, but the tree-fern does not ascend so high. Grasses are very rare in these woods, excepting the dwarf bamboo, now cultivated in the open air in England.

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into

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Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into
Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128
the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101
the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144
all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773
a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173
earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174
character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197]
radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619
important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173
tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

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157 An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A 142 group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet—rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists.* The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is 131 their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are 132 supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when

[141] * I have seldom been able to insert my own wrist (which is smaller than the average) into the wooden guard which the Lepcha wears on his left, as a protection against the bow-string: it is a curved ring of wood with an opening at one side, through which, by a little stretching, the wrist is inserted.

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Though fond of bathing when
they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

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181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.
411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

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bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
tease the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

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partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora ciburia*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

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Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against [752]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.-Analyst]

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[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[584] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves
[567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

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Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal
remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the
hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the
rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease
are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are
still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they
pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good
spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every
rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief,
and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts
to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils,
who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they
acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert
all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:"
they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between
the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they
assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they
sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg,
bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving
praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others
again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed
to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

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756 [781] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 181 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [343] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 144 181 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

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a mixed race calling themselves Kumpa Rong, or Kumpa Lepchas; but they are emigrants from Tibet, having come with the first rajah of Sikkim. These people are more turbulent and bolder than the Lepchas, and retain much of their Tibetan character, and even of that of the very province from which they came; which is north-east of Lhassa, and inhabited by robbers. All the accounts I have received of it agree with those given by MM. Huc and Gabet.

Next to the Lepchas, the most numerous tribe in Sikkim is that of the Limboos (called "Chung" by the Lepchas); they abound also in East Nepal, which they once ruled, inhabiting elevations from 2000 feet to 5000 feet. They are Boodhists, and though not divided into castes, belong to several tribes. All consider themselves as the earliest inhabitants of the Tambur Valley, though they have a tradition of having originally emigrated from Tibet, which their Tartar countenance confirms. They are more slender and sinewy than the Lepchas, and neither plait their hair nor wear ornaments; instead of the ban they use the Nepal curved knife, called "cookree," while for the striped kirtle of the Lepcha are substituted loose cotton trousers and a tight jacket; a sash is worn round the middle, and on the head a small cotton cap. When they ruled over East Nepal, their system was feudal; and on their uniting against the Nepalese, they were with difficulty dislodged from their strongholds. They are said to be equally brave and cruel in battle, putting the old and weak to the sword,

to here: they are all described in various papers by Mr. Hodgson, in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal." The Dhurma people are numerous at Dorjiling; they are often runaways, but invariably prove more industrious settlers than the Lepchas. In the Himalaya the name Bhotan is unknown amongst the Tibetans; it signifies literally (according to Mr. Hodgson) the end of Bhote, or Tibet, being the eastern extreme of that country. The Lepchas designate Bhotan as Ayeu, or Aieu, as do often the Bhotanese themselves. Sikkim, again, is called Lhop, or Lho', by the Lepchas and Bhotanese.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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080 carrying the younger to slavery, and killing on the march such captives as are unable to proceed. Many enlist at [703] Dorjiling, which the Lepchas never do; and the rajah of Nepal employs them in his army, where, however, they seldom obtain promotion, this being reserved for soldiers of Hindoo tribes. Latterly Jung Bahadur levied a force of 6000 of them, who were cantoned at Katmandoo, where the cholera breaking out, carried off some hundreds, causing many families who dreaded conscription to flock to Dorjiling. Their habits are so similar to those of the Lepchas, that they constantly intermarry. They mourn, burn, and bury their dead, raising a mound over the corpse, erecting a headstone, and surrounding the grave with a little paling of sticks; they then scatter eggs and pebbles over the ground. In these offices the Bijooa of the Lepchas is employed, but the Limboo has also priests of his own, called "Phedangbos," who belong to rather a higher order than the Bijooas. They officiate at marriages, when a cock is put into the bridegroom's hands, and a hen into those of the bride; the Phedangbo then cuts off the birds' heads, when the blood is caught on a plantain leaf, and runs into pools from which omens are drawn. At death, guns are fired, to announce to the gods the departure of the spirit; of these there are many, having one supreme head, and to them offerings and sacrifices are made. They do not believe in metempsychosis.

The Limboo language is totally different from the Lepcha, with less of the *z* in it, and more labials and palatals, hence more pleasing. Its affinities I do not know; it has [212] no peculiar written character, the Lepcha or Nagri being used. Dr. Campbell, from whom I have derived most of my information respecting these people, was informed,*

* See "Dorjiling Guide," p. 89. Calcutta, 1845.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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on good authority, that they had once a written language, now lost; and that it was compounded from many others by a sage of antiquity. The same authority stated that their Lepcha name "Chung" is a corruption of that of their place of residence; possibly the "Tsang" province of Tibet.

The Moormis are the only other native tribe remaining in any numbers in Sikkim, except the Tibetans of the loftier mountains (whom I shall mention at a future period), and the Mechis of the pestilential Terai, the forests of which they never leave. The Moormis are a scattered people, respecting whom I have no information, except from the authority quoted above. They are of Tibetan origin, and called "Nishung," from being composed of two branches, respectively from the districts of Nimo and Shung, both on the road between Sikkim and Lhassa. They are now most frequent in central and eastern Nepal, and are a pastoral and agricultural people, inhabiting elevations of 4000 to 6000 feet, and living in stone houses, thatched with grass. They are a large, powerful, and active race, grave, very plain in features, with little hair on the face. Both their language and religion are purely Tibetan.

The Magras, a tribe now confined to Nepal west of the Arun, are aborigines of Sikkim, whence they were driven by the Lepchas westward into the country of the Limboos, and by these latter further west still. They are said to have been savages, and not of Tibetan origin, and are now converted to Hindooism. A somewhat mythical account of a wild people still inhabiting the Sikkim mountains, will be alluded to elsewhere.

It is curious to observe that these mountains do not appear to have afforded refuge to the Tamulian * aborigines

* The Tamulians are the Coles, Dangas, &c., of the mountains of Central India and the peninsula, who retired to mountain fastnesses, on the invasion of their

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of India proper; all the Himalayan tribes of Sikkim being markedly Mongolian in origin. It does not, however, follow that they are all of Tibetan extraction; perhaps, indeed, none but the Moormis are so. The Mechi of the Terai is decidedly Indo-Chinese, and of the same stock as the savage races of Assam, the north-east and east frontier of Bengal, Arracan, Burmah, &c. Both Lepchas and Limboos had, before the introduction of Lama Boodhism from Tibet, many features in common with the natives of Arracan, especially in their creed, sacrifices, faith in omens, worship of many spirits, absence of idols, and of the doctrine of metempsychosis. Some of their customs, too, are the same; the form of their houses and of some of their implements, their striped garments, their constant and dexterous use of the bamboo for all utensils, their practice of night-attacks in war, of using poisoned arrows only in the chase, and that of planting "crow-feet" of sharp bamboo stakes along the paths an enemy is expected to follow. Such are but a few out of many points of resemblance, most of which struck me when reading Lieutenant Phayre's account of Arracan,* and when travelling in the districts of Khasia and Cachar.

The laws affecting the distribution of plants, and the lower animals, materially influence the migrations of man also; and as the botany, zoology, and climate of the Malayan and Siamese peninsula advance far westwards into India, along the foot of the Himalaya, so do also the varieties of the human race. These features are most conspicuously displayed in the natives of Assam, on both sides of the Burrampooter, as far as the great bend of that river, beyond which they gradually disappear; and none of the

country by the Indo-Germanic conquerors, who are now represented by the Hindoos.

* "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal."

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Himalayan tribes east of that point practise the bloody and brutal rites in war that prevail amongst the Looties, Khasias, Garrows, and other Indo-Chinese tribes of the mountain forests of Assam, Eastern Bengal, and the Malay peninsula.

I have not alluded to that evidence of the extraction of the Sikkim races, which is to be derived from their languages, and from which we may hope for a clue to their origin; the subject is at present under discussion, and involved in much obscurity.

That six or seven different tribes, without any feudal system or coercive head, with different languages and customs, should dwell in close proximity and in peace and unity, within the confined territory of Sikkim, even for a limited period, is an anomaly; the more especially when it is considered that except for a tincture of the Boodhist religion among some few of the people, they are all but savages, as low in the scale of intellect as the New Zealander or the Tahitian, and beneath those races in ingenuity and skill as craftsmen. Wars have been waged amongst them, but they were neither sanguinary nor destructive, and the fact remains no less remarkable, that at the period of our occupying Dorjiling, friendship and unanimity existed amongst all these tribes; from the Tibetan at 14,000 feet, to the Mechi of the plains; under a sovereign whose temporal power was wholly unsupported by even the semblance of arms, and whose spiritual supremacy was acknowledged by very few.

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New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet
(Neuerwerbungen aus Sikkim und Tibet)

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

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/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya Kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war servic

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[529] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Nork
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be name
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

000 paintings: Tshangs pa dkar po, r Do rje grags ldan, Tsi ma ra, bSei khrab chan, rDo rje shugs ldan, Kha chhe dmar po and Nam mkha' hbar hdzin. The latter three pictures are works of Lha bris pa dBu chhen mo, the court painter of the next to the last Panchen Lama.

The new acquisitions of the Tibetan collection also contain twenty different Tibetan books and manuscripts, the majority of which are rare works. Among these, the following deserve special mention: an excellently printed ritual book (from the library of the monastery of Tengyeling in Lhasa, which was destroyed in 1912) of the Kun tu bzang po religious dance; further, six different medical works—among these the compendium of Tibetan medicine known as brGyud bzhi, with two rare commentaries for the printing of which a special permit from the Tibetan government must be obtained in each case—various historical and ritual works of the rNying ma pa sect, texts used in the cult of certain oracle divinities and a book that contains directions for performing soothsaying rites.

The spread of instruction in the Tibetan language will be fostered by a series of records spoken in the Lhasa dialect, as well as by tape recordings and records of Lama songs and Tibetan folk songs, dance songs, and wedding songs. A further supplement of the Tibetan collection comprises photographs of Tibetan ethnic types, pictures of the religion dances and rites of the Lamas, and especially a /272/ series of photographs showing all the phases of a soothsaying ceremony performed by a Tibetan oracle priest while in a trance.

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113 De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R., "Wedding songs of the Lepchas." Asiatische Studien, Vol. VI, 1-4, Zürich, 1952.

2. For a description of the various groups of Lepcha priests, see note 12 of my publication "Ancient funeral ceremonies, etc."

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Neuerwerbungen aus Sikkim und Tibet.

Von René Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

Eines der Ergebnisse meiner im Februar 1953 zum Abschluß gebrachten dreijährigen ethnographischen Forschungsarbeiten im sikkimesisch-tibetischen Grenzgebiet war die Anlegung von Sammlungen für das Museum für Völkerkunde in Wien. Die Mehrzahl der erworbenen Objekte sind Hausgeräte, Kleidungsstücke, kultische Instrumente und Waffen der Leptschas, der Ureinwohner des Himalaya-Königreiches von Sikkim. Der in Rasse und Sprache den Tibetern verwandte Leptscha-Stamm hat im Laufe der letzten drei Jahrhunderte infolge des Vordringens stärkerer Nachbarn eine fortschreitende Einengung seines Lebensraumes erfahren. Er zählt nur mehr 30.000 Angehörige, deren Großteil im eigentlichen Sikkim lebt, während einzelne Leptscha-Siedlungen noch in der Umgebung von Darjeeling, Kalimpong, im nepalesischen Bezirk von Illam und in zwei Tälern Bhutans zu finden sind. Durch weitgehende Übernahme des Brauchtums nepalesischer Einwanderer, die heute die stärkste Bevölkerungsgruppe Sikkims bilden, haben die Leptschas viel von ihrer völkischen Eigenart eingebüßt. Die Anlegung dieser ersten Leptscha-Sammlung stieß daher auf beträchtliche Schwierigkeiten, denn die meisten der früher von den Leptschas verwendeten Gegenstände wurden in neuerer Zeit durch Erzeugnisse nepalesischen, indischen oder gar europäischen Ursprungs ersetzt.

Die der Sammlung eingereihten Hausgeräte sind zum Großteil aus Bambus hergestellt; wir finden unter ihnen verschiedengeformte Gefäße, Löffel und Spateln, einen Butterstampfer, Körbe, ein Kornsieb, Seiher, eine einarmige Waage sowie Holzschüsseln verschiedener Größe, die bei der Zubereitung von Hirsebier, dem von den Leptschas bevorzugten alkoholischen Getränk, Verwendung finden. Die heute nahezu erloschene Webkunst des Stammes veranschaulichen ein Handwebstuhl mit eingespanntem, nahezu vollendetem Webstück; es zeigt — ebensowie ein zweiter, bereits vollendeter Webstreifen — charakteristische Leptscha-Muster. Die zum Weben der Stoffe verwendeten Fäden wurden früher mit Pflanzenfarbstoffen gefärbt, von denen ebenfalls Proben mitgebracht wurden. An Kleidungsstücken ist eine vollständige Frauentracht vorhanden, mit dem dazugehörigen Schmuck: zwei großen, mit einer Silberkette verbundenen Nadeln, einem Paar mit Korallen besetzter Ohrringe sowie zwei Halsketten, eine zum Großteil aus Türkisen, die andere aus Korallen und blauen Glasperlen bestehend. Als besonders charakteristische Stücke der einst üblichen Tracht der Leptscha-Männer wurden ein aus Rohr und Nesselarten verfertigter Hut und ein Paar mit Türkisen geschmückter Männerohrringe erworben.

An Musikinstrumenten zählt die Sammlung drei Flöten verschiedener Größe, darunter eine Doppelflöte, eine Maultrommel, einen Gong mit Holzschlegel sowie zwei alte Kriegstrommeln, deren Gehäuse aus Kupfer bestehen. Sie wurden von b a T a n h d z i n r n a m r g y a l, dem sechsten König von Sikkim (geb. 1769, Regierungsantritt 1780, starb in Lhasa im Jahre 1793), dem Leptscha-Häuptling von Sukmi, der den tibetischen Titel eines Dsöngpön (r D z o n g d p o n, „Burgvogt") trug, in Anerkennung treuer Kriegsdienste zum Geschenk gemacht.

Einige besonders wertvolle Stücke der Sammlung sind Teile der Ausrüstung einer M u n - Priesterin (mit Adlerkrallen, Vogelschnäbeln, Zähnen wilder Tiere und Muscheln verzierter Beutel mit Tragband, als Kopfschmuck dienende Federbüschel und Teile eines Rosenkranzes mit Glocke), die in der Familie einer vor wenigen Jahren verstorbenen bekannten M u n - Priesterin, der Norkit Leptschani aus dem Orte Sekep, seit etwa drei Jahrhunderten vererbt wurden. Diese Ausrüstung, von der nur noch ein zweites gleichartiges Stück in Sikkim bekannt ist, wurde jeweils von einer M u n im Palais des Königs zu Gangtok bei den Zeremonien verwendet, die alljährlich in der Nacht vor der Abhaltung des Lama-Tanzes zu Ehren des Berggottes G a n g s c h h e n m d z o d l n g a stattfinden. An anderen, im ursprünglichen vorbuddhistischen Religionswesen der Leptschas verwendeten Objekten, die ebenfalls erworben wurden, sind zu nennen: Amulette, Zauberstäbe, Körbchen zur Verwahrung von Substanzen für magische Heilungen, ein bei der Beisetzung der als B o n g t h i n g bezeichneten Leptscha-Priester verwendeter kleiner Steigbaum, der dem Emporsteigen der Seele des B o n g t h i n g zum Himmel dienen soll — einer der vielen Belege für die in der Leptscha-Religion stark verwurzelten schamanistischen Vorstellungen —, ein von den Y a b a - Priestern verwendeter Gong, und Geräte zur Ausführung von Zeremonien zu Ehren der Ahnengeister, örtlicher Gottheiten und zur Besänftigung der Dämonen, die bei den mit magischen Mitteln geführten Kämpfen der Priester entfesselt wurden. Mit in die Sammlung wurden auch einige Urnenstücke eingeschlossen, die auf Grund der Untersuchung einer Version der Turmbaulegende der Leptschas bereits bei oberflächlichen Grabungen auf dem Plateau von Daramdin in Westsikkim aufgefunden wurden; die Funde, von denen einige Band- und Wolfszahnmuster aufweisen, stammen möglicherweise aus der Zeit des großtibetischen Reiches (9. Jahrhundert n. Chr.).

An Jagd- und Kriegswaffen zählt die Sammlung mehrere Bogen verschiedener Größe und Art — darunter eine für die Vogeljagd verwendete Bogenschleuder —, Pfeile, Jagdgifte, Buschmesser, ein altes Schwert und einen runden Kriegsschild aus Rohr. Unter den verschiedenen Fischfanggeräten ist besonders ein aus Nesseln hergestelltes großes Wurfnetz zu erwähnen.

Es gelang auch, drei der seltenen, in der vom tibetischen Alphabet abgeleiteten Leptscha-Schrift abgefaßten alten Manuskripte zu erwerben; auch wurden Kopien einiger Leptscha-Bücher sowie Niederschriften mehrerer Hochzeitslieder angefertigt.

Die 93 verschiedene Objekte zählende Leptscha-Sammlung wird durch einige gleichfalls von den Leptschas verwendete Gegenstände bhutanesischen Ursprungs (Webstreifen, Kriegsschild aus Nashornhaut, Reiskörbchen mit charakteristischen bunten Mustern) ergänzt. Eine weitere Vervollständigung der Sammlung bilden rund 300 Farb- und Schwarzweiß-Photos sowie Tonbandaufnahmen von Liedern der Leptschas und zweier ihrer Nachbarvölker, der Gurkhas und Tamang. Dank der freundlichen Hilfsbereitschaft des Leiters der 3. Dänischen Zentralasien-Expedition, S. K. H. Prinz Peter von Griechenland und Dänemark — dem gleichfalls das Ermöglichen einer besonders günstigen Übersendung der Sammlungen nach Europa zu danken ist — wurde das über die Leptschas verfügbare ethnographische Material auch um Farbfilmaufnahmen der Trachten und Tänze dieses Stammes bereichert.

Bei den aus dem tibetischen Raum stammenden Gegenständen handelt es sich vor allem um Kultobjekte, die einer Ergänzung der bereits im Museum vorhandenen Tibet-Sammlung dienen: ein an die 3 m hohes „Fadenkreuz der Ma mo Dämoninnen" (Ma moi mdos), das als Dämonenfalle beim Wetterbeschwören Verwendung findet, Fadenamulette, Geräte zur Ausführung verschiedener Zeremonien der Lamas, ein wertvolles altes Rollgemälde (thang ka), die Berggottheit gNyan chhen thang lha darstellend, ein Rollgemälde mit Bildnissen des Gründers der Karmapa-Sekte, Dus gsum mkhyen po, und seiner Schüler; weiters drei thang ka mit Darstellungen der auf tibetischen Rollgemälden verhältnismäßig selten abgebildeten Orakelgottheiten Tshangs pa dkar po, rDo rje gragsldan, Tsi ma ra, bSei khrab chan, rDo rje shugs ldan, Kha chhe dmar po und Nam mkha' hbar hdzin. Letztere drei Bilder sind Werke des Lha bris pa dBu chhen mo, dem Hofmaler des vorletzten Pantschen Lama.

Die Neuerwerbungen der Tibet-Sammlung umfassen weiters zwanzig verschiedene tibetische Drucke und Manuskripte, bei denen es sich in der Mehrheit um seltene Werke handelt. Unter ihnen wären besonders zu erwähnen: ein vorzüglich gedrucktes, aus der Bibliothek des im Jahre 1912 zerstörten Klosters von Tengyeling in Lhasa stammendes Ritualbuch des Kun tu bzang po Religionstanzes, weiters sechs verschiedene medizinische Werke — darunter das als brGyud bzhi bezeichnete Sammelwerk der tibetischen Medizin mit zwei seltenen Kommentaren, zu deren Druck jeweils eine Sondererlaubnis der tibetischen Regierung eingeholt werden muß —, verschiedene Geschichts- und Ritualwerke der rNying ma pa Sekte, beim Kult einiger Orakelgottheiten Verwendung findende Texte und ein Druck, der Anweisungen zur Ausführung von Wahrsagungsriten enthält.

Der Erweiterung des Tibetisch-Unterrichtes dienen ein im Lhasa-Dialekt gesprochener Schallplattenkurs, sowie Tonband- und Schallplattenaufnahmen von Lama-Gesängen und Volks-, Tanz- und Hochzeitsliedern der Tibeter. Eine weitere Ergänzung der Tibet-Sammlung bilden Aufnahmen tibetischer Volkstypen. Bilder der Religionstänze und Riten der Lamas und insbesondere eine

Reihe von Aufnahmen, die alle Phasen der im Trancezustand vollzogenen Wahrsagungszeremonie eines tibetischen Orakelpriesters zeigen.

Anmerkungen.

1. Über die Leptschas siehe folgende Veröffentlichungen:

De Beauvoir-Stocks, C.: Folklore and Customs of the Lap-chas of Sikkim. Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New Series), Vol. XXI, Calcutta 1925, No. 4.

Gorer, G.: Himalayan Village. London 1938.

Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas. London 1938.

De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. — Gorer, G.: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha Lamaist ceremonies. The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV, No. 2, Lucknow 1951.

De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R.: Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas. The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. V, No. 1, Lucknow 1952.

De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R.: Hochzeitslieder der Lepchas. Asiatische Studien, Vol. VI, 1—4, Zürich 1952.

2. Eine Darstellung der verschiedenen Gruppen von Leptscha-Priestern siehe unter Anmerkung 12 meiner Veröffentlichung „Ancient funeral ceremonies etc.".

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THE

TRIBES AND CASTES OF BENGAL.

By H. H. RISLEY,

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE, OFFICIER D'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE.

ANTHROPOMETRIC DATA.

Vol. I.

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1891.

[title page]

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PREFACE

114 THE measurements recorded in these volumes were taken under my supervision in Bengal, the North-Western Provinces and the Panjab during 1886 and the two following years. The instruments used were those contained in the *boîte anthropométrique* recommended by Professor Paul Topinard in his *Eléments d'Anthropologie Générale*, with the addition of the goniometer devised by him for measuring the facial angle of Cuvier. With a single exception, Professor Topinard's methods of measuring and of calculating indices were followed throughout. The exception is the naso-malar index, the data for which were measured and the index calculated in the manner described by Mr. Oldfield Thomas in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland for May 1885.

My cordial acknowledgments are due to Mr. J. C. Nesfield, Inspector of Schools, Oudh, for supervising the measurements taken in the North-West Provinces; to Chandi Singh, Clerk in the office of the Inspector of Schools, Oudh, for carrying out those measurements; to Alá-uddin, Civil Hospital Assistant, Lahore, for the measurements taken by him for the Panjab; and especially to Babu Kumud Behari Sámanta, Civil Hospital Assistant, for the large series of measurements taken by him in Bengal, and for his labours in calculating indices and averages, and in making a variety of ethnographic inquiries for me.

A full analysis of the measurements, indicating their bearing upon the ethnology of Northern India, and also upon certain more general questions which have been discussed by ethnologists in Europe, will be given in a separate volume.

[following title page]

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LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE I.

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Indices.									Facial angle.
				Nasal.	Nasomalar.	Cephalic.	Fronto-zygomatic.	Vertico-cephalic.	Vertico-bimalar.	Vertico-frontal.	Vertico-bizygomatic.	Height and weight.	
1	Tunda ...	Darjiling	28	73·4	107·1	79·5	80·5	74·0	56·0	54·0	67·0	.....	66
2	Passan ...	Ditto ...	27	66·0	109·7	86·3	76·4	77·8	55·6	51·2	66·9	.....	61
3	Harchu ...	Ditto ...	26	72·0	111·1	80·5	76·0	69·3	54·4	48·8	64·1	.....	63
4	Gachu ...	Ditto ...	27	76·0	104·8	81·9	80·4	69·7	54·3	50·4	62·7	.....	56
5	Sungkul ...	Sikkim ...	43	69·8	108·7	82·4	74·4	71·7	54·5	48·8	65·5	.....	69
6	Gairlunda ...	Do. ...	25	74·5	105·4	75·8	75·4	61·8	49·3	44·3	58·7	.....	63
7	Singbir ...	Do. ...	39	74·5	111·5	79·3	80·7	70·0	52·3	50·9	62·9	.....	69
8	Nahasuk ...	Darjiling	26	68·0	107·8	73·1	79·2	59·9	50·6	47·1	59·4	.....	60
9	Adda ...	Sikkim ...	25	58·9	111·1	82·3	78·8	70·2	55·1	50·9	64·6	.....	64
10	Lama ...	Do. ...	25	72·5	108·4	80·6	80·4	65·7	51·7	46·9	58·3	.....	67
11	Achu ...	Darjiling	28	72·5	107·2	83·6	72·0	67·8	50·4	44·9	62·3	.....	71
12	Nanja ...	Ditto ...	25	68·5	108·6	80·7	76·2	68·5	51·3	48·2	63·2	.....	68

13	Jhara ...	Sikkim ...	28	72·5	107·1	86·8	81·8	72·0	53·0	51·1	62·5	.....	68
14	Panchu ...	Do. ...	26	69·2	110·2	87·9	78·2	68·7	56·6	51·3	65·6	.....	65
15	Lamba Sinh ...	Darjiling	30	70·9	107·6	79·1	74·4	61·2	49.7	44·6	60·0	.....	60
16	Angi ...	Ditto ...	27	71·6	107·6	79·3	74·6	68·8	55·1	48·5	65·0	.....	70
17	Dyah ...	Ditto ...	25	82·9	100·2	82·3	75·0	72·5	50·2	48·8	65·1	.....	73
18	Nam Sinh ...	Ditto ...	25	76·0	102·9	80·1	74·4	70·7	49·2	49·7	66·8	.....	64
19	Gumba ...	Ditto ...	28	67·2	109·6	81·6	72·5	70·6	50·0	49·5	68·2	.....	66
20	Chara ...	Ditto ...	26	62·5	104·8	78·6	75·5	63·9	47·0	46·5	61·6	.....	66
21	Dhusing ...	Ditto ...	26	72·5	104·7	85·3	78·2	70·3	48·6	50·0	63·8	.....	72
22	Eafa ...	Ditto ...	25	62·2	108·0	81·3	80·7	71·4	48·3	52·6	65·2	.....	69
23	Atebi ...	Ditto ...	28	69·0	105·7	78·9	73·3	61·3	43·6	42·8	58·4	.....	62
24	Choba ...	Ditto ...	37	74·5	104·6	79·6	72·7	67·4	47·1	45·8	62·9	.....	68
25	Shonga Dinzi ...	Ditto ...	26	70·0	106·0	85·6	74·8	72·5	48·0	48·5	64·9	.....	64
26	Pashang ...	Ditto ...	45	72·5	109·2	79·4	73·6	69·4	46·8	47·5	64·5	.....	63
27	Assang ...	Ditto ...	25	66·6	105·0	79·8	79·3	70·0	47·1	49·5	62·3	.....	66
28	Khamba ...	Ditto ...	42	74·0	110·0	84·0	76·2	72·8	47·6	49·0	64·2	.....	68
29	Ponra ...	Ditto ...	28	65·3	108·0	74·1	74·3	68·6	49·7	49·7	66·6	.....	63
30	Dokan Sinh ...	Ditto ...	29	70·9	107·8	79·8	75·1	67·7	47·0	47·4	63·1	.....	62

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LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE I—*concluded.*

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Indices.									Facial angle.
				Nasal.	Naso-malar	Cephalic.	Fronto-zygo-matic.	Vertico-cephalic	Vertico-bimalar.	Vertico-frontal.	Vertico-bizygo-matic.	Height and weight.	
31	Bachu ...	Darjiling	30	74·0	104·9	77·4	71·1	69·1	49·5	47·0	66·1	.....	70
32	Koman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	26	70·0	106·7	79·4	72·3	68·0	47·6	47·2	65·2	.....	65
33	Sopraka ...	Ditto ...	28	67·9	108·4	77·7	72·5	66·2	48·1	46·3	63·9	.....	62
34	Ramba ...	Ditto ...	37	70·8	108·7	78·0	76·9	72·6	51·2	49·7	64·6	.....	68
35	Sungar ...	Ditto ...	26	61·4	109·8	78·0	73·9	64·5	44·1	45·4	61·4	.....	65
36	Ribu ...	Ditto ...	27	67·9	110·4	83·4	74·2	66·8	46·4	44·6	60·1	.....	69
37	Adung ...	Ditto ...	30	66·0	109·2	84·5	75·7	72·1	45·7	47·1	62·2	.....	65
38	Tunda ...	Ditto ...	45	68·5	112·7	77·8	75·9	65·1	49·7	47·0	61·9	.....	73
39	Tasa ...	Ditto ...	26	69·0	109·2	84·5	73·5	66·9	48·8	46·6	63·3	.....	62
40	Hansi ...	Ditto ...	40	67·9	110·0	77·5	75·3	66·5	45·8	46·3	61·4	.....	68
41	Bahadur ...	Ditto ...	27	63·6	109·0	81·2	70·7	66·5	44·7	44·7	63·3	.....	60
42	Talman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	45	80·0	105·8	90·2	75·0	74·0	48·1	49·5	66.0	.....	

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43	Kaen Sinh ...	Ditto ...	35	80·0	108·5	76·6	73·0	66·9	47·5	46·6	63·8	.....		69
44	Tusing ...	Ditto ...	37	80·8	106·1	83·3	72·8	67·8	47·0	46·1	63·3	.....		65
45	Absian ...	Ditto ...	45	63·6	107·6	81·4	70·0	68·9	48·1	45·3	64·8	.....		69
46	Powa ...	Ditto ...	28	62·9	107·6	79·7	73·7	64·3	44·6	44·6	60·5	.....		64
47	Jitmun ...	Ditto ...	37	72·7	104·8	83·8	70·1	70·3	44·9	44·1	62·8	.....		70
48	Arsinh ...	Ditto ...	37	64·8	108·1	80·8	75·9	66·3	43·9	46·6	61·4	.....		67
49	Dowsinh ...	Ditto ...	38	[illegible]·6	111·7	80·7	70·6	69·3	48·1	47·6	67·4	.....		64
50	Kolhari ...	Ditto ...	36	68·6	109·0	79·6	75·0	67·4	46·0	46·0	61·3	.....		67
51	Keroki Sinh ...	Ditto ...	29	75·4	112·3	82·5	74·8	72·5	50·4	51·4	69·2	.....		71
52	Shaimtu ...	Ditto ...	25	69·8	104·7	82·5	74·2	66·2	47·2	46·8	63·0	.....		68
53	Shohar ...	Ditto ...	45	60·0	110·8	75·3	72·6	67·7	46·5	46·5	64·0	.....		65
54	Silmu ...	Ditto ...	40	67·7	103·7	80·5	76·4	69·8	48·4	47·4	62·1	.....		59
55	Pasinh ...	Sikkim ...	40	75·0	.....	80·4	74·2	64·8	.....	44·1	59·4	354·3		66
56	Lempu ...	Darjiling ...	...	80·9	.....	85·3	74·6	69·7	.....	46·5	62·3	331·4		...
57	Maktang ...	Nepal ...	...	80·0	.....	80·2	82·6	68·1	.....	51·8	62·7	362·9		67
	Average ...	.....	...	67·2	108·1	79·9	75·2	67·6	49·0	47·6	63·3	350·5		64·1

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LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE II.

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Measurements.														Remarks.
				Nasal height.	Nasal width.	Bimalar breadth.	Zygomalar breadth.	Cephalic length.	Cephalic breadth.	Minimum frontal breadth.	Maximum bizygomatic breadth.	Height, vertex to inter-capsullary point.	Height, vertex to tragus.	Height, vertex to chin.	Stature in C. M.	Weight in grains.		
1	Tunda ...	Darjiling	28	49	36	112	120	186	148	108	134	62	121	200	149·0	.....		
2	Passan ...	Ditto ...	27	53	35	113	124	183	158	104	136	63	130	203	157·4	.....		
3	Harchu ...	Ditto ...	26	50	36	117	130	185	149	105	138	78	148	215	158·0	.....		
4	Gachu ...	Ditto ...	27	50	38	124	130	194	159	115	143	80	128	228	163·2	.....		
5	Sungkul ...	Sikkim ...	43	53	37	114	124	182	150	102	137	80	141	209	162·8	.....		
6	Gairlunda ...	Do. ...	25	51	38	110	116	182	138	99	131	77	135	223	154·6	.....		
7	Singbir ...	Do. ...	39	51	38	113	126	189	150	109	135	70	132	214	159·2	.....		
8	Nahasuk ...	Darjiling	26	50	34	115	124	186	136	107	135	92	132	227	161·8	.....		
9	Adda ...	Sikkim ...	25	56	33	117	130	181	149	108	137	73	132	212	163·0	.....		
10	Lama ...	Do. ...	25	51	37	118	128	186	150	107	133	96	140	228	163·2	.....		
11	Achu ...	Darjiling	28	51	37	110	118	177	148	98	136	75	122	218	155·0	.....		

12	Nanja ...	Ditto ...	25	54	37	116	126	192	155	109	143	77	130	226	160·6	.....		
13	Jharu ...	Sikkim ...	28	51	37	112	130	175	152	108	132	68	134	211	159·6	.....		
14	Panchu ...	Do ...	26	52	36	127	140	175	154	115	147	79	133	224	166·0	.....		
15	Lamba Sing ...	Darjiling	30	56	39	117	126	182	144	105	141	85	132	235	168·4	.....		
16	Angi ...	Ditto ...	27	53	38	117	126	184	146	103	138	68	131	212	160·0	.....		
17	Dyah ...	Ditto ...	25	47	39	108	118	186	156	105	140	80	136	215	160·2	.....		
18	Nam Sing ...	Ditto ...	25	50	38	101	104	181	145	102	137	70	132	205	150·0	.....		
19	Gumba ...	Ditto ...	28	53	36	104	114	180	147	103	142	71	132	208	149·4	.....		
20	Choora ...	Ditto ...	26	56	35	103	108	178	140	102	135	81	124	219	164·6	.....		
21	Dhoosing ...	Ditto ...	26	51	37	105	110	178	152	108	138	75	136	216	161·4	.....		
22	Eafa ...	Ditto ...	25	53	33	100	108	182	148	109	135	69	131	207	155·0	.....		
23	Atobey ...	Ditto ...	28	55	38	104	110	185	146	102	139	79	137	238	169·0	.....		
24	Chobs ...	Ditto ...	37	55	41	107	112	192	153	104	143	76	137	227	160·0	.....		
25	Shonga Dinzi ...	Ditto ...	26	50	35	100	106	176	151	101	135	73	130	208	157·6	.....		
26	Pashong ...	Ditto ...	45	51	37	97	106	180	143	98	133	72	134	206	155·0	.....		
27	Assang ...	Ditto ...	26	51	34	99	104	181	147	104	131	70	130	210	152·0	.....		
28	Khambu ...	Ditto ...	42	54	40	100	110	182	153	103	135	73	133	210	155·0	.....		
29	Ponra ...	Ditto ...	28	52	34	100	108	186	138	100	134	67	130	201	149·0	.....		
30	Dokan Singh ...	Ditto ...	29	55	39	102	110	184	147	103	137	77	130	217	154·4	.....		

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LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE II—*concluded.*

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Measurements.													Remarks.
				Nasal height.	Nasal width.	Bimalar breadth.	Nasomalar breadth.	Cephalic length.	Cephalic breadth.	Minimum frontal breadth.	Maximum bizygomatic breadth.	Height, vertex to inter-superciliary point.	Height, vertex to tragus.	Height, vertex to chin.	Stature in C. M.	Weight in grammes.	
31	Bachu ...	Darjiling	30	50	37	101	106	182	141	96	135	79	130	204	152·0	.....	
32	Koman Sinh ..	Ditto ...	26	50	35	103	110	185	147	102	141	82	133	216	152·0	.....	
33	Sepraka ...	Ditto ...	28	53	36	107	116	189	147	103	142	89	141	222	153·4	.....	
34	Ramba ...	Ditto ...	37	48	34	103	112	187	146	100	130	78	122	201	153·4	.....	
35	Sungar ...	Ditto ...	26	57	35	102	112	191	149	105	142	86	129	231	167·4	.....	
36	Sibu ...	Ditto ...	27	53	36	105	116	181	151	101	136	90	129	226	159·4	.....	
37	Adung ...	Ditto ...	30	53	35	97	106	181	153	100	132	80	131	212	160·2	.....	
38	Tunda ...	Ditto ...	45	54	37	110	124	185	144	104	137	84	135	221	162·0	.....	
39	Tasa ...	Ditto ...	26	55	38	108	118	175	148	103	140	72	129	221	158·0	.....	
40	Hansi ...	Ditto ...	40	53	36	100	110	187	145	101	134	75	138	218	153·0	.....	
41	Bahadur ..	Ditto ...	27	55	35	99	108	181	147	99	140	79	129	221	160·0	.....	

42	Talman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	45	50	40	102	108	174	157	105	140	88	134	212	154·2	.....	
43	Kaan Sinh ...	Ditto ...	35	50	40	105	114	193	148	105	141	86	135	221	153·4	.....	
44	Tsuinh ...	Ditto ...	37	47	38	98	104	180	150	102	140	94	136	221	152·4	.....	
45	Abzian ...	Ditto ...	46	55	35	104	112	183	149	98	140	73	139	216	167·0	.....	
46	Powa ...	Ditto ...	28	54	34	104	112	188	150	104	141	94	137	233	157·4	.....	
47	Jitmun ...	Ditto ...	37	54	39	103	108	192	161	101	144	87	138	229	159·0	.....	
48	Arsinh ...	Ditto ...	27	54	35	98	106	183	148	104	137	81	140	223	158·4	.....	
49	Dowsinh ...	Ditto ...	33	51	38	102	114	182	147	101	143	72	129	212	156·6	.....	
50	Kolhari ...	Ditto ...	36	51	35	99	108	182	145	99	132	81	131	215	154·8	.....	
51	Keroki Sinh ...	Ditto ...	28	53	40	105	118	183	151	107	144	70	134	208	157·0	.....	
52	Shaimtu ...	Ditto ...	25	53	37	105	110	178	147	104	140	90	137	222	164·2	.....	
53	Shohar ...	Ditto ...	45	60	36	101	112	195	147	101	139	75	140	217	166·4	.....	
54	Silmu ...	Ditto ...	40	59	40	106	110	190	153	104	136	77	139	219	156·8	.....	
55	Pasinh ...	Sikkim ...	40	44	33	...	...	179	144	98	132	86	147	222	153·6	54421·0	
56	Lempu ...	Darjeeling ...	...	42	34	...	...	178	150	100	134	91	136	215	156·0	51709·4	
57	Maktang ...	Nepal ...	...	45	36	...	...	187	150	114	138	87	142	220	162·5	58966·9	
	Average ...	.....	...	51·6	34·7	106·4	115·1	183·5	146·7	103·5	137·5	78·5	133·5	217·0	157·0	55032·4	

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Nosce te ipsum.

BAND XII.

Mit 12 Tafeln und mehreren Textillustrationen.

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[Title page (B)]

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE 'LEPCHAS' OR 'RONGS' AND THEIR SONGS

BY

L. A. WADDELL, LL.D.

114 The 'Lepchas' or 'Rongs', are the wild Mongoloid aborigenes of Sikhim, a mountainous tract, about 5000 square miles in extent, in the south-eastern Himalayas, which is wedged in between Nepal on the west, Bhotan on the east, Tibet on the north, and the plains of Bengal on the south. These people are particularly interesting, as they are amongst the least civilized of all the Himalayan tribes [1]. They have preserved intact their tribal language and many of their primitive savage customs, on account of the peculiarly isolated position of their rugged country — shut in as it is by high wall-like ridges from Nepal and Bhotan, by the everlasting snows from Tibet, and by the deadly belt of *Tarai* jungle from the Indiam plains. But they are now, however, fast dying out [2], and losing their identity by intermarriage with the swarms of more civilized Nepalese and Tibetans who have lately swept into their country, and especially so since it has been opened up under British rule; but neither their language or customs have yet been fully recorded, nor have their ethnological affinities been clearly ascertained.

Having lived amongst these people for several years in Darjiling and in their forest homes, I here attempt to rescue from oblivion some of their songs — a subject on which nothing has hitherto been published. This I do at the request of Professor A. GRÜNWEDEL, who has already in the T'oung-Pao [3] published a small dictionary of their speech, which he compiled from some missionary tracts, and the Lepcha Grammar of the late Mr. MAINWARING [4]; and he is at present editing Mr. MAINWARING's large manuscript: Lepcha-English Dictionary. My anthropometric and ethnographic materials bearing on the racial affinities of this tribe are too bulky to be included in the present paper. Here it may be sufficient to mention that the results of my observations are in many ways

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[1] Except those in the extreme east, in Asam.
[2] The pure Lepchas now (1898) number only a few thousands, and their language is likely to become extinct in two or three generations.
[3] In 1892. Also a short Lepcha text in 1896, 526—60, and another in Bastian's Festschrift, Berlin 1896.
[4] Grammar of the Rong or Lepcha. Calcutta 1876.

[p. 41]

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114 opposed to the views of Mr. RISLEY [1]), Colonel DALTON [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers Drs. CAMPBELL and HOOKER, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. HOFFMANN).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1891, IV. p. b.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]). They are especially near the 'Arieng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pô* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Forbes, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all. 114 174

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapche' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2]), because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mô-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Ialaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu. 101

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3]), is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, Ne-*pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4]) by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He 212 114

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[1]) From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nangas*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Naga*s is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2]) It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ‚Welsh' or ‚the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilized neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ‚Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. TAYLOR's „Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3]) The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikkim'.

[4]) This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. PAUL (pp. 1—30), where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1680, died 1717 A. D.

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212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been MR. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitra-
194 rily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rim* or *Rimm*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tsak* 'the head' is never pronounced *Tak* or *T'yak* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pen-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pen-so* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Sak-dam*, 'world', *Se-nil* 'a bear', *Mem* or *Mim* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Se-ber*' a musk-deer; *Pak-o'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yak-men* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Se-nu*, *Mim*, *Hlo*, *Kyong*, *Se-bur*, *Pakyok*, *Yak-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced '*Rieim*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 298; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 168). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GAUTWENDI, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppâra Jâtaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter *ä*, and *ch* for *c*.

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192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riuk bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha
192 book, the *Tashe sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a
114 Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

533 The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve
192 many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

101 One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the
192 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi*' *Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*Sa-ut-tap*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*p'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-teb*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 375.

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[551] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all the tribal groups (*a-git*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñal-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam tsii-mo*). and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ran-min*' and '*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*gö*', (goe) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

776 The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 80); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepchá views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Ta-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tasho-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-c*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-pdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those
[153] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-s'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have
[622] developed any organised coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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[1]) loc. cit. 2.

192 [2]) *Ta-shi* is from *Ta* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tuk* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-ting*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Ta-she*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nung-lyan-no* and *Ka-t'ang-ñ*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sdé-fok*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sikong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *De-lok* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [778] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor [177] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-temples.

756 The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Ivo-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 468. The term *Yok* or *Yok-mas* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tyol-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

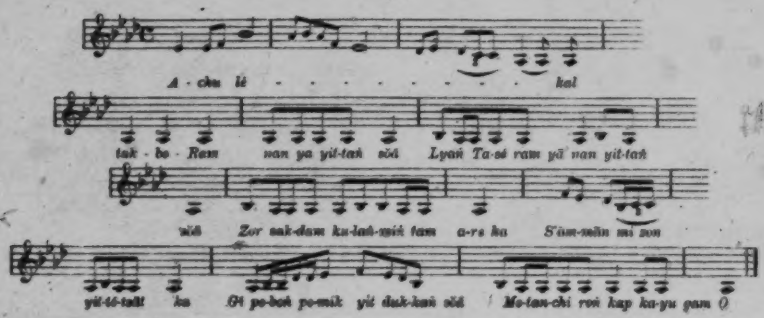
533 kindness of my wife who took it down in European notation. The first of these songs, *A-chu-lé*, shows traces of the very old pentatonic scale, says Sir SOURINDRO MOHUN TAGORE, to whom I showed it, and he adds in regard to this scale 'though it is observable in the Scotch ballads, it is the scale (still) in use amongst the Chinese, Japanese and Siamese'.

533 In the first song it will be noticed that the first verse has more even measure than any of the others and is evidently the oldest and purest. In the second the resemblance
539 between the primordial grand mother and Eve is very striking. The third and last verses, with their numerous Tibetan words and references to Buddhist symbolism, are decidedly modern, though many of their words have retained their *Tak-bor* expressions.

I.

A-CHU-LÉ!

O JOY!



A-CHU-LÉ!
539 *Kél* [1]) *Tak-bo Ram nan yé yit-tak sôd*
Lyàk Ta-se Ram yé nan yit-tak sôd
Zer sak-dam ku-lak-mik tám ó-re-kél

S'ám-mán-mi son yit tó-takt ka
Gi po-bok po-mik yit duk kak sôd

Metanchi Rok kap ka-yu gam o.

A-CHU-LÉ!
Tar-ó'i-s'om Nam-byak kak yit so
Lak-bi-lak yit war-ka-bó ok yit ro-ó-re
Ka-yit sak-ó-re ta-lyák fo yit ma-o

O JOY!
The *kél* Head-Father-Spirit in the olden time
Made the earth. (He) The Sky-Existing One
Made in this tearful [2]) world the fields to cover the bosom of the stones.
When the *Sham-man-mi* men were made
And the *gi* jointed Bamboos and trees, at that same time were we
The sons of the (one-) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs.

O JOY!
The *far-chi-shom* mulberry [3]) trees were made,
The rice, the vegetables were made,
The running rivers with the *ro-o-re* fishes were made

---

[1]) This has been suggested to me as meaning „dark", that is to say „mysterious", and thus implying that it has been borrowed from the Indian *Kála*; but it seems to me to be a pure Lepcha word.
[2]) Also „rainy" (*zor*).
[3]) „Nambyong" is *Morus serrata*. The fruit also of „Nambong" (*Adina cordifolia*) is eaten.

539 *Zo-hik-dyol yil ku-di-ren yil tsat kuk*

Ya-t'ik nam yil tsat ahi
Tsat sam-rek yil ho nam yil ma o.

A-CHU-LE!
Mil-tok-mo ho-yil s'o-tik-mo yak yil-tsat ata.

Lik-sar-mo tim-bre ha-ho-ma li-so

Ya-mam yil-tsat ahi s'al-min-ti lyon s'ok

Nim-min-ti hin s'ok hi s'al-li-ma li-li go
Ma-s'al nan hi s'al-li-ma tyat ma lal-na pu
Yok kar-vo kup chum-bu gi s'u dik ma o.

A-CHU-LE!
La-ma-hor ha-bam lik-lar mim dyak bum

Fat ma yan nat ha lik-la-min ka-s'ok.
Hyap-la-min dyak tyat ma bon nam yok 'ni

Di-so mim tam-bo mi-tak-dug

Chum-bo kup nan mi-f'ik-mo s'u yik lal-la.
A-cha-le! Sim-pi dup. Ta-s'i s'o. [1])

The *Sok-o-re* sky-birds were made. The ground *bag-*
(dyol worms,
The *ku do-ren* insects and the rain bow were made
(All) by our first old great grand father.
(But our) *tsat-sam-dong* [2]) troubles were made by our
(old first great grand mother.

O JOY!
Then the *sho-ting* letters and the *mal-tong-mo* books
(were made
The *ling-s'en-mo* symbols [3]) and the *be-ko-mo* augu-
(ries *li-so*
If by my *s'al-man-ti* feeble attempts and *hin-man-ti*
(childish blunders
My *s'al-li-ma* tongue has not been fluent
I pray you will not cut off my *s'al-li-ma* tongue
(For) I am (only) a kar-vo young boy singing standing.

O JOY!
With my *lib-ma-bor* folded hands and *lik-la-ma*
(folded hands.
With my not being able to unfold them
I beg you will not cut my *lik-la-ma* fingers and
(*kyam-la-ma* feet
(For) I am a *da-so-mam* paltry one, and a *mi-tang-dug*
(child
Struggling *mi-f'ik-mo* I what can I sing?

II.

EH-YE!

A NEW YEAR'S SONG.

Only the first and last verses of this song appear to be ancient, the middle verse contains many Tibetan phrases and words.

EH YE!
Zor sak-dam lang-mik tim a-re-hi
Prat-tak-ham sak-hi sa-rong re
Pat nam-ma lo ram gam nam-ma ram
Ryu tsat sa sak-hi ang sa so-nip gam.

EH YE!
Sher ts'o-di hik-tsam t'sak tsat sa
Chi-har-mam s'ok [4]) *bi-har-tsim du tsat sa*
Pa-re gi-po-tsar nam opin sa om [5]) *tim-bre*
Yim-bu yok lab-dan ahu dik ma.

EH YE!
All the Rong and their kin have collected this day
On the field-covered stony bosom of the tearful earth
To-day is the day of happiness
To-night is the night of strength (renewed for the
(New-Year).

We have *bi-har-mam s'ok*, *bi-har-cham* assembled
By the decree of *s'ar* fate and *Om* signs [6])
We sing this humbly standing up
For good luck for the *gi-po-tsat* coming year.

---

[1]) The last two phrases are Tibetan.
[2]) The *d* as usually in Lepcha is often written *r*.
[3]) *Tim-bre* from Tibetan *rten-'brel*, the Buddhist *Nidānas* or Concatenation of Causes of Existence: this is viewed by the Lepchas as a magical charm, and the *Tsat-ber* expression annexed may have belonged to an older word for such charms
[4]) The written version has *s'op*.
[5]) This syllable is out of the place in written version.
[6]) Literally *tim-bre* = *Nidānas*.

[539] Ee Yz!

Mo-tan-chi Ñoñ hap dun non bān	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lū-non po-bong yit duk kuñ su	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tasm* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tasm po-mig duk kuñ su po-e'or boñ	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kung su Ñoñ hap gom yoñ s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

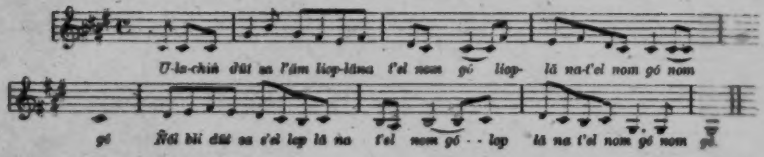
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the [574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing [273] behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-la-duñ dūt.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la dun dūt su-Ñām liep-lā na-t'el nom gō.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñōl-bil dūt su-t'el " " " "	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Suñ la lum s'u fuñ-ruñ " " " "	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ku-for bi-rum nuñ nūñ liep-lā diñ nil nom gō.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'or la tuñ-kat su-t'el " " " " "	Like a bright golden tussel.
Mit tuñ-gum diñ-nil nom " " " " "	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'at tu-bil-la liep-lā na-t'el nom gō.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tuñ-muk fo s'at nuñ nūñ " " " "	Like a sorrowing *S'uñ* bird.
Sūñ la ma run na mo " " " "	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Luñ la ma run na mo " " " "	I feel very sad!

IV.

The Pangs of Love.

Chin-che-ne tuñ-uk buk po ma t'ūn ta-gum	Though I tasted not the wild chin-che-ne yam [7])
Kyuñ-rūn-lo lat duk ñ-tim-bu lūñ nom-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyuñ-rūn-lo* heart.

---

[824] [1]) *Po-cher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo
[231] from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poe*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, Nees & Arnott). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[415] [2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poñ-t'at*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poñ-kis*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *kip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñol-bil*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *lum-s'u*.

[222] [7]) *Tuñ-uk-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

539 *Fio-rto-lit kar-pak go-ma ma-ma-pak*
Ar-tan-tanm bit dak ŝ-tim-bu lit nam-ni
Chak-ma-li ka-mik go ma-f'ŭn ma-pak
Mar-la bŭu uk dat ŝ-tim-bu lit nam-ni.

Though I ate not the *fio-rto-lit* wild plantain.[1])
I feel great pain in my *ar-tan-tanm* liver.
Though I took not the wild *chan-ga-li* yam[2])
I am burned up with a fiery thirst.

V.

Ee Ye!
Sik-la ma-run-ne lok la ma-run-ne
Mit tan-pam ngm-f'ani ŝŭ-par-lo ank-ka
Kyak-ra-lo lat ŝ-ro ro fari-lŭ go
Ar-tan-tanm byat la-kat kyŭk la go ma.

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
Listen O maidens behind! (respected) as *ŝŭ-par* great-mothers
I feel this *kyak-ra-lo* heart (of mine)
Is pierced through and my *ar-tan-tanm* breath[3]) is chill.

Ee Ye!
Go-rak ka! Sik la ma-run-ne
S'er f'a-di suk-lo ram ka man e
Ow kit-tanm s'u nak-tam go dam lo che
Sak-la ma-run-ne lok la ma-run-ne

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
O Head-Father spirit, creator of *S'er* fate.
Tell me what is my *Ow* destiny!
I feel very sad!

Ee Ye!
S'i-mŭi-mi kap gi-par-nak kin kap ma-lo nak
Ki-dak tanm-pa-mon man-rak
S'u mat nak dani go yat a'ŭ dŭk ma ŝ
Sik la ma-run-ne lok la ma-run ne.

Ee Ye!
I (am only) a *S'i-ruam-mi* boy,
A *gi-par-nak* youngster. I implore you humbly standing
Why have you given me this *ma-lo-nam* and *tanm-la-nam* (sorrow
I feel [illegible] sad.

VI.

Fak-tanm-mon ma pam
Kŭk tanm nai na s'an
Mi-f'ik-ma s'u yŭk
Kŭk tanm nak ma lam
Dak-mar-bŭu ama f'at
Tak-ta-li Nŭ-nak ka.
Zam-ma-li Fa-dat f'ŭk
A-ya ra-ma ŝ
Kyak-ra-lo lat dak
Ar-s'i ban s'u yŭ
Z'am ta-f'i s'u yŭ
Gi-par-nim s'u de.

O you with the flowing hair!
O fair one with the neat parted hair!
Why have you *mi-f'ik* me charmed me so?
You fair one with the neat parted hair!
O old great grandmother *Tak-ta-li Nŭ-nak*
You *dak-mar-bŭu* joiner of our breath
O old great grandfather *Zam-ma-li* lord *Fa-dat*
Praise be to your names!
(But) why have you *ar-s'i-ban* created me?
Why have you *z'am-ta-mi* created me?
Why have you *gi-par-nim* created me?
To suffer such heart-breaking sorrow?

The following seems a figurative declaration of affection by a youth of the valley the Singbali-river towards a girl of the Kirungpata-glen.

---

[1]) *Kar-pak* is the wild plantain (*Musa sp.*). It is full of large sharply jagged and irritant seeds. The cultivated plantain *Kar-dat* is seedless.

[222] [137] [2]) *Ka-nak* is a hairy round wild yam of large size, which grows near the surface of the ground, but its tubers cause intense thirst. Other wild yams found in Sikhim are *Sa-ma-buk*, *Sak-pal-buk* and *Sa-li-buk* (?) probably the *Chak-ma-li* of text.

[3]) Literally „Lungs".

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VII.

S'it-bū-li ut-hak [1]) *ci-be vr to gó s'em,*	O! who changed the course of the Singhali [2]) river?
Mit tak-pum ma-lam [3])	It was the powerful fairy, the sister [4]) who is behind?
Ki-rui [5]) *pū-lū ut-hak ci-be vr to gó s'em*	O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
Gi-yak-tak fo-lak nam gó mi pa [6])	It was a powerful like me a *gi-yak-tak* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-ro hap c'am-bu gyu-lam-bi [7]) *tpat ni na li*	Oh come with me, a little *kar-ro* boy to the cross-roads
Dik-tam-pin hum hat be yat ahu yak s'ū	And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pii* [10]) rupee
S'it mū-yi [8]) *p'i-lū a-t'ak ñak ni pū-lū yo*	Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
Sik le ma-ram-ro lak le ma-ram-ma. [9])	My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 *Yak-mo ium-ret hip ñim bū*	When a Yangmo's door is shut
574 *A-mm tap ma-ni ma-mi*	One cannot find feet to eat
Hao-ki tak-rak ok ñim bū	But when his door is wide open
563 *Ñat-* [11]) *tpat a-mm tap ni s'o.*	One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

---

[1]) *Ut-hak* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *ma-lim*.
[3]) Or *Ñi-rui*. [4]) Or *yak*.
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'yam-ma-ñ*. [9]) Or *Mar-yam-ma*.
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous. [436]
[11]) Or *Kat*.

ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE FOREGOING SONGS

9.

539 [illegible]
212 [illegible]

[illegible]

2.

[illegible]

3.

[illegible]

4.

[illegible]

5.

[illegible]

6.

[illegible]

539
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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

539
2.12

539
212

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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THE INDO-TIBETANS

The Indo-Tibetan and Mongoloid Problem
in the Southern Himalaya and North-Northeast India

with 74 Illustrations
and one Map

By
Fr. Matthias Hermanns

[Title Page]
[p. i]

K. L. Fernandes
Bandra, Bombay 20

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DEDICATED

TO

BOMBAY BRANCH ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

ON THE OCCASION OF ITS

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Bhutan AK2

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13. A LEPCHA HOUSE OF SIKKIM

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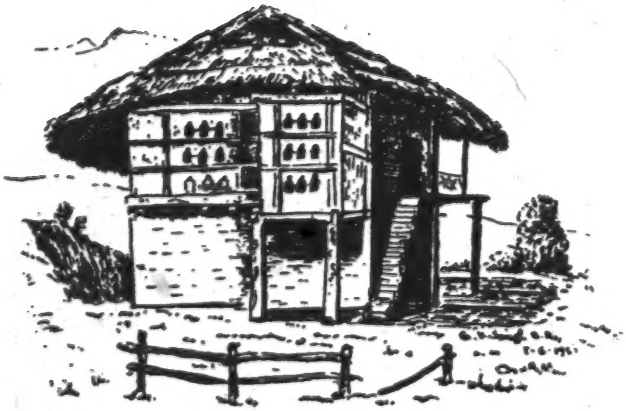

14. A BHUTANESE HOUSE OF SIKKIM

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AK5 Lepcha
Tibet AJ1
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15. A NEPALESE HOUSE OF SIKKIM

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16. A TIBETAN HOUSE OF SIKKIM

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CHAPTER III

THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES OF SIKKIM

A. The Lepchas

The Lapches or Lepchas are supposed to be the original 101
inhabitants of Sikkim. They call themselves Rong; the Tibetans call them Mon, and the Bhutanese, Meri. The Mongoloid problem can best be studied through the Lepchas of the Southern Himalayas and hence they are dealt with more thoroughly.

According to one opinion the Lepchas are supposed 173
to have come not from Tibet, but from the east of the mountains from Assam and Upper Burma.[22] Their own tradition, how- 174
ever, states that their original home was in the neighbourhood [103]
of the great mountain, Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga[23] the second highest mountain in the world. That is the Tibetan name and means the "Great Glacier of the Five Store-rooms." The Lepcha name for the mountain is, "King-tzum-song-bu." King-tzum means "Highest part of the forehead," song-bu means "the highest." Literally it means, "the highest over our head." This Lepcha name is reproduced phonetically by the Tibetans as "Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga," which has quite a different meaning. This snow-covered mountain has [776]
an important part to play as the habitat of the spirits. King-tzum-rum is the god of happiness; Rum-king-tzum is the god of fate.[24] From it the Lepchas derive the name Rong, by which they are known. Rong means "peak" or "mountain peak" and has the same significance as the word Arong.

Another tradition has it that the place of their origin is on the holy mountain Kailasa (Ti se) way up in Tibet. On the mountain is the stone Ne-long which bears the footprints [778
of Buddha and of animals. The god, Pum-rum, protector of 776]
the hunters, lives there. Pum-rum is also another name for the Supreme God of the Lepchas as we shall soon see. The

22. J. C. White, Sikkim and Bhutan, London, 1909, p. 7.
23. Kangchenjunga, Fig. 17 & 18.
24. G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, Berlin 1898, 17a, 356 b.

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oldest homeland bears the name Damsang. We have here an inkling of the Tibetan Lama influence, which, as in Hindu tradition, links the original homeland with the holy district. Since the King-tzum-song-bu is very closely linked with the myths of the Lepchas we shall go more deeply into a study of it.

(a) Myths of the Creation of the World

The myths of the creation are of special importance. "Create" in the Lepcha language is called "ayit" or "it" in its abbreviated form. Another word for create is "de-bo." "It-rum" or "de-rum" means "god of creation"; "Rum" by itself means "god." "Pum-thing-rum" signifies the same. "Pum bo" means "Principal," "Chief," "God." The name "It-bo" or "It-bo-mu" is again taken from the creative action of god. Other names are, "Ta-she-thing," "Sa-dzug-rum." The latter are connected with the sun god and are used by some as the emblem of the Supreme God.

The following is the myth about creation: In ancient times Rum created a great expanse of water. Nothing else existed at the time. Then he created on the bed of the water the fish "ngo." Next he formed three pairs of deities who lay down crosswise on the fish. The first of the pairs were Rug-lu and Rug-lom, and after them were Mon-li and Rönggul, Pö-ril and Pö-dong. These are three pairs of male and female deities. Over these were fashioned Söm-li and Söm-nag-mön-mu, a couple who as man and wife are supposed to belong to the human race. They all carried the earth which rested on them in the form of a dish. The slightest movement of the fish resulted in earthquakes. Rum then created the great mountains of the earth, the chief of which is King-tzum-song-bu; then four more peaks, Pön-dām, Pön-tzum-dju, Pön-tzum-tang-rem-dju, Don-dong-tang-nyik-dju. Another story records that two chief mountains were created, *viz.*, the Kang-chen and the Kang-lo. Another Mun makes a contrary statement, "The snow-capped mountain Kang-chen-rum was created first and as a companion to it, Nyo-ling-rum, the goddess of the great ocean was created." In some versions of this story the goddess is named Lyang-ser-

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dong-bong, who is a mountain goddess in the plain. There exist many other variations about the sequence of creation. 773 776

Then Rum made the two rivers, Rong-nyo and Rong-nyit, to flow down from the mountains. They are male and female. In the middle of the female Rong-nyo, he created the rock, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, similar to the navel in the human body. A high mountain, regarded as the navel of the world is a well-known conception in Asia. The goddess, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, is supposed to live on this rock and childless parents pray to her to be blessed with children. The idea of male gods having their abode on the snow-capped mountains and the goddesses in the lakes, is fairly common among the Lepcha. These gods and goddesses are often linked with the first parents in Lepcha mythology.[25]

The sacrificial prayers of the Mun and the Bong thing are often preceded by a legend of creation. The text which we shall later render in detail begins thus :

"Fa dong dju fa dong dō gom shi gom yu rum ! 773
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dō (personal male and female 776
deities) and Gom shi, Gom yu rum (hunting gods). 539
Lyang it ung it lyang sog dōm it
The earth was created, the water was created and the whole world was created.
Chi log so log it
Millet beer and husked rice were created
Lyang tōg bu ta she it ga.
Lyang wife, and Tōg bu ta she's son (man) were created"[26]

Another part reads as follows :

"Ayan na ba lyang ung ma it ma den na ba.
In very ancient times when land and water were not yet created."

An old report has the words :

"Ta she num rum ayit .....Ta she created the good spirits
Num shim nyo ayit .....He created man.
Lyang ayit .....He created the earth.
Ung ayit .....He created water
Gun pang ayit .....He created all things."[27]

25. Report of Gu-gu Bong thing at Gît biyong.
26. Text of Gu-gu Bong thing.
27. Dictionary of the Lepcha language, op. cit., p. 121 b.

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773 Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living
[774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the
[775] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence.
[772] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological
[776] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 125/127. N. 4. p. 368.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 236, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

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(b) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF MAN

There are several myths current about the creation of 773
man. Pum-thing created the first human beings. The first man was called Ti-gung-thik and his wife was called Ni-gung-ngal. They lived in Mayal-lyang, which lies on the other side of King-tzum-song-bu. There was then no disease, no suffering, no death. Now all human beings return to this [775]
place after their death.

In days of yore it was possible to reach this land from the earth. A hunter once came into the district of Mayal. When night overtook him, he prepared to put up for the night. Then he became aware of lights gleaming a little distance away. He approached the place, contacted the people and asked for shelter. They said to him, "What are you doing over here in Ren-dyong?"[34] He replied, "I hunt animals so I can provide myself with food." "Have you then nothing else to eat? Have you no grain to sustain yourself?" "No, I have none," replied the hunter. So they gave him gherkins, rice and millet and gave him instructions about the cultivation of these seeds after the re-migration of the birds after winter. Later on another hunter travelled to the spot and was stranded. He lit a fire and began to prepare his food. The inhabitants came there and were desirous of looking on at the proceedings. The hunter, however, looked upon them as intruders. He grew furious and struck them with a view of driving them away. They said to him, "In our land no one strikes another. We all live in peace and harmony. Take up your belongings and leave the place as quickly as you can, or our dogs will pounce upon you." The hunter looked around and perceived dogs that resembled bears and tigers. He grew terrified and fled away as fast as he could. Great storms followed in his wake; there were landslides and earthquakes; mountains came crashing down and all the entrances to the land were completely sealed over. Ever since this incident Mayal has remained inaccessible.[35]

Gorer gives the following description of Mayal, "The people 775
of Mayal consists of seven brothers each with their own name

34. Dwelling place of the ancestors and now pronounced "den-dyong."
35. Report from Kalimpong.

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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164 787] goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits 772] of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo- 775
Yook and Alan-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as [776
if it were human seed from a husband and the women are 772]
fertilised and fruitful.

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a- 773
ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37]

The Dän-ai Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kafir-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the 773
god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had 776
no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-ahe-thing and Tög-bu-thing then came into being. But

36. op. cit. p. 235 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ding near Maria-Basti.

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773 the real god of creation is It-bo. He has a wife by name of
[776] De-bo. (It-bo and De-bo mean "to produce" and "to create.") It-bo first created a man Ti-gung-thik. He then took a bone from the body of this man and out of it he created a wife for him. The place where the first human beings lived was called Da-lon-par-tan. (This is also the plain in which the tower intended to reach heaven was constructed.) The first couple lived there in perfect happiness and contentment until they became sinful. When they fell into sin the god Rum punished them by sending great floods which continued unabated for fifteen days so that all the people were drowned. Only one Lepcha couple were able to save themselves in a wooden ship.

Stocks narrates the following myth of creation : "In the beginning there was only sea, and the creator Tashey-takbo-
[772] thing made two kinds of fish,—ngo, was the common kind, while the ngo-yang had a serpent form. From the sea we believe that a tortoise supports the world, and on it Tashey-takbo-thing created birds and animals.

Then he tried to make a form of man from butter, but it would not stand up, as whenever he made it, it melted. (Had the butter only remained firm, we should all have been very beautiful). Then he made a human form of earth and mud, and wind came into this resemblance of man and life was created. Then Tashey-takbo-thing made blood out of the water which he put in it and the bones he created from stone. Then he moved away to see whether the creature he had made could answer him and speak, but as he had no nerves or veins he was unable to do so. So Tashey-takbo-thing picked a great many creepers from the jungle and from those which he spread all over the form, it spoke.

Thus was the first male created, but as there was no female he was lonely, and could not reproduce himself. One day as he was catching birds with his snare in the jungle, Tashey-takbo-thing entangled a woman in one for him to catch. So the man caught her and brought her to his home ; but at first they could not marry as there was no go between to help them to talk over the matter. But at last the Rum decided to send the owl (tam-bum) down the country of creation,

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It-lyang."[38] This myth is interesting because it relates, in the first place, the two efforts made by God to create man, and secondly because it relates how God brought the woman into the life of the man, by placing her in some mysterious way in the snare set by man to catch birds. 773

According to another myth the genealogy of mankind is even more complicated. Among the various creatures that were created as It-mo's children, there is also Takbo-thing, who hitherto had been designated as the god of creation. Ta-she is added to the name with whom we shall become more closely acquainted later on. "The last two to be born were Takbo-thing and Nazong-ngyu, and although these were brother and sister, they became husband and wife and had many children."[39] These children however were evil spirits and demons. They were not nourished by their mother, but were disowned and driven away. They live not on the earth but outside the earth. The reason why monsters were born out of this wedlock was surely due to the forbidden and irregular marriage between brother and sister. Rum then separated them. After the separation a human being was born. The mother loved this child deeply and fed it at her breast. When the other children perceived this they grew very jealous, hated the child intensely and so it died. The grief-stricken mother sent two birds up to Tak-bo-thing in order to fetch from him the Water of Life and the Water of Death. Tak-bo-thing gave them both the waters and instructed them about the use of the waters. On their return flight the birds decided not to use the directions as they had been given to them but to reverse them. And so it happens that men die and are always born again. Rum stands as a symbol to man. The Mung demons, on the contrary, do not die, and a priest-magician, Bong-thing, was sent to keep them under control. Only then was it possible for man to live on the earth. He is called Tar-bong-mu. As he was catching birds one day he found a fairy, the daughter of the Lha-ma-yin.[40] He forcibly took this beautiful Na-rib-nom as his wife. To avoid the misfortune consequent [585]

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38. op. cit. p. 355 sq.
39. op. cit. p. 346.
40. Tibetan name for Titans.

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776 to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage
585 ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment
373 play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 384.

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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth 773
he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made 776
his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nasong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each [782
year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal 241]
most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in 776
Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-köb, and the daughter, Bi-köb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-köb and Bi-köb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices [782]
performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni- [773]
gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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776 consequence they had to labour in order to procure their
[773] livelihood. These first human beings are the parents of the Rong (Lepcha), the Brug-pa (Bhutanese) and the Jimdar (Nepalese). The very first man, the progenitor of the race, is Ti-gung-pum." So far the statement of Sa-liang. And so we have different traditions that tell the story of the first human beings. Often entire genealogies of gods and spirits are quoted.[48] Finally, the immediate ancestors of mankind make their appearance. The presence of evil in the world is sometimes attributed to them, for, being brother and sister, they live as man and wife, without the proper performance of the marriage ceremonies. Other myths offer other solutions for the problem of evil in the world.

(c) MYTHS OF THE DELUGE

773 "In the beginning all men were good. Gradually they grew perverse. This annoyed Rum to such an extent that he sent a great deluge to destroy them all. Only one high mountain peak remained above the water. This was originally called Dōng-grung, a ladder which links earth with heaven. The mountain is now called Dān-dong. In order to appease god and make the flood abate, the people sacrificed chi, millet beer, through the bird 'ko-hon,' (partridge). As the bird sprayed the chi in sacrifice to heaven some of it fell on its breast. This fact is supposed to explain why even today, the bird's breast is bitter to the taste. The sacrifice was pleasing to god and the flood abated."

We have still another version of this tradition, "Rong-nyo, the female river, and Rong-nyit, the male, were deliberating with each other as to how they could meet and unite on the plain at the outskirts of the jungle. In the Lepcha language this place is called Pa-sog. Rong-nyo chose as her guide through the mountains a snake which glided straight to their destination. Rong-nyit chose the partridge as his guide. The bird flew hither and thither and took a confusing route across the mountain, thus causing Rong-nyit to arrive late at the rendezvous. He was very angry when he discovered that Rong-nyo had already arrived. Furiously he shouted, 'I

48. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. 345 sq.

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am going back!' As he flowed backward the waters rose 773
higher and higher and soon covered the mountains. All mankind was drowned. Only one couple were able to save themselves on the high peak, Dān-dong. When this happened Rong-nyo said to the priest, 'Offer a sacrifice to Rong-nyit. Appease him so that he may turn back and the floods subside.' The priest did as he was told, and when the sacrifice had been offered the floods abated. Then Rong-nyo said, 'I am a woman. I shall, therefore, be obedient and live at a lower level than man, who shall henceforth flow over me.' And so when the two rivers did eventually meet, Rong-nyit streamed over Rong-nyo, who flows beneath it."[44]

This myth makes it abundantly clear that the quarrel between the man and the woman was the real cause of the flood. Instead of the bird acting as the intermediary, the priest performs the conciliatory sacrifice. Another version of this myth identifies the partridge with the woman, "In the beginning Fooroong and Nazong-nyo lived, our first grandfather and mother, the ancestors on the earth. The flood came on and nearly every human creature perished, only two who ran to the summit of Mount Tendong-lho were saved. Now Takbo-thing was the father of Tashey-thing, who had married the partridge (ko-hon-fo) and she put some chi in a large leaf (tung-fyum-nyom) which she offered to her father-in-law saying that if he only would, he could stop the flood. And Takbo-thing looking down from the country of the Rum, saw that the world was flooded, and that his daughter-in-law was praying to him, and offering him 'chi.' He took up his walking stick (pa tung) and struck the world so that the water sank in. But the partridge split some of the 'chi' on her breast. (The mark can be seen to this day, and because of this the partridge is called tung-fyum). So the world became dry once more, and the trees and the bushes commenced to grow once again and the world was re-peopled."[45] In this myth the relationship between Tashey-thing and Takbo-thing is again altered. This is another instance of the manifold variations prevalent among Lepcha legends.

44. Kalimpong tradition.
45. Stocks, op. cit. p. 380; cfr. the genealogy of God and his family p. 60.

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T73 [T76] In another legend the serpent king is connected with the flood: ".... And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female and it is from these two that the human beings have spread over the entire world..... When these two were made, birth so multiplied that there was not enough room in the world. Then Parli-bu, who was the serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky. Everyone fled to the top of Kong-chen-chu, the highest peak in the Himalayas, but only two people were saved. The place where they stood is called Mayak-kyong to this day. While the flood was raging, Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world named Yongli-pono, to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent to pieces thus making the waters run down into the plains and we, the Rong folk, still believe that the Blue Mountains (that can be seen from the valley of Rangpo-chu) are the remains of the cut body of the serpent. When the world was dry once again, Tashey-thing sent down two rivers from the Himalaya mountains guided by another serpent called king Paril-patong and a quail, the Ko-hun-fo, and these were Rung-nyo (Tista) and Rung-nyit.

He also sent Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu down into the world from the height of Mayal-kyong, giving them the name Tikung-tek and Nikong-gnal. These are the first 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' of the Rong folk. As they had no king, Tashey-thing sent down Gyabo-chaya-dor-tulku from Mayal-kyong and he is the 'grandfather' (ancestor) of the present Maharaja."[48] This legend links the first parents with the flood and the re-peopling of the earth. The name of the first king who is sent by the High God is quite Tibetan and points to Tibetan motifs, according to which, the first king came from heaven.

Mainwaring, the great collector of cultural treasures of the Lepchas, cites the following myth, "It may be noted that the Lepchas have legends in common with divers other primitive races,....regarding the flood and the tower of Babel. The legends were without doubt, brought with them

48. op. cit. 388 sq.

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from beyond the snows, but they have connected the incidents 773
with their present place of residence. There is a hill visible from Darjeeling, which, as the tale hath it, when all the country was under water, arose and supported a ship containing a few persons, all other people being drowned. The hill rose up like a horn, (hence the name a-róng, a horn,) and afterwards subsided to its present form. It is known to the Europeans 773
as the Camel's back. On the top of the lofty Sung-lilho, 173
it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas—(the na-óng) now extinct,—endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rock and blocks of stone, as the ruins, are shown on the place."[47] We ourselves heard this saga of the tower and its ruins, in Darjeeling. In Git-biyong, we heard the following version of this saga, "The Lepchas filled a great many pitchers with earth, and piled them higher and higher over each other in an effort to reach the heavens. The man on the top reached so high that with the aid of a long hook he fancied he could link earth with heaven. Whereupon he shouted to the people beneath him, 'Quick! Pass a hook on to me.' It must be noted that in the Lepcha language the word for 'hook' and for 'cut off' have an identical pronunciation. The people yelled, 'Why cut off?' From above sounded the urgent answer, 'Quick, the hook.' They understood it to be, 'Quick, cut off!' So they cut off the rope and their tower came crumbling to the ground."

Here is another version of the story, "When (after the flood) the world was full of people once more, a tribe called the Na-ong, or 'Ignorant persons' prepared to ascend to the Rum country, and they began to build a tower of earthen pots. They piled them so high that the Rum country was only one pole away. The creator thought they were becoming too eager and too zealous, and that it was not good for them.

So he thought he would create confusion, and make them all speak in different tongues, so that they would misunderstand one another. The man at the top shouted, 'Kok vim yang tale' (hand up the pole with the hook,) while the men at the bottom heard the words, 'Chek tala' (cut it

47. G. B. Mainwaring, A grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) Language, Calcutta, 1876, p. XX.

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773 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man
173 at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 The myth describing the building of the tower demons-
774 trates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 289 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 336 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 337.

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it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sōn-lyang, originally called Sōm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [1 84] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

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(f) THE CONCEPT OF GOD

776 The Lepchas express the idea of God by the word "Rum." By this term they understand gods and spirits which are favourable to men and who offer them protection. In contrast to the word Rum, they have the word "Mung" to indicate the goblins and the demons who are harmful to man. The Rong possess a few genealogies of gods with which we shall later become acquainted. The name "Rum" standing all by itself expresses the idea of the Supreme God; but words expressing the special attributes of the Supreme God are often joined to the word "Rum." To cite a few instances: Pum means "first cause," "the essential," "the absolute," "the first beginning," and so we have the words: Pum-rum, Pum-thing or Pum-thing-rum, which are popular names for the Chief God. Then again "ayit (it)," "(ay)it-de," "de-bo," or "(ay) it-bo" mean "to create," "to produce," and we have the words It-rum, De-rum, It-bo and Pum-bo, all of which express the idea of God as the creator. Some of the Lepchas say that the Supreme God is not the creator, but that he delegated the function of creation to some other spirits. In the concept of God that is current among the Rong, we can observe that the original functions of the Supreme God have been attributed to spirits who are looked upon by them as the adjutants and the supporters of the Supreme God. This is how the divine genealogies originate and lead up to a kind of demiurge and other forms.

Some of the Mun and the Bong-thing call the Supreme God, Sa-dzug-rum. Sa-dzug is the sun. Sa-dzug-rum means "sun god" as well as "God of the heavens." "Ta-she-thing" is a very common name for the Supreme Being. Su-li-man, a Lepcha from the Bam-ling tribe, who lives in Se-ryo-cha, gave us this description of the Supreme God. "Ta-she-thing is the Supreme God. He is everywhere. Anyone who understands the rites may offer him a sacrifice." Ta-she-thing is the name given also to Padmasambhava who is the founder of Lamaism in Tibet. Occasionally one meets with the rather long drawn out name "Ta-she-tak-bo-thing." "Tak-bo-thing" or "Tok-bo-thing" is regarded by some as the son of Ta-she-thing. The majority of the Lepchas are of the

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opinion that Rum has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bo-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquite and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god." 776 [796 782]

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."[53] The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Gorer, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Gorer considers It-bo-mo to be female,[54] but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pum-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest 776 224

53. op. cit. p. 237.
54. op. cit. p. 236.

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mön-lam-rum, Tok-tzöm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. [82] Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. [753] Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly
[278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[58]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

58. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-ho."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[792 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

792 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
793 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

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nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

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In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 294 a.b.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwa of the
171 Bhils, the Parlar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[176] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[181] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[154] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering; [787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(h) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [658] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

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755 up the entire skin. The blood is not used at all. On the
782 little table that is against the wall the Tormas are deposited
778 and in front of them the two butter-lamps. The order of the
776 Tormas is as follows: (See the drawing figs. 20 & 21) 1. Rum-
755 thing-bo-a-mu, the wife of the supreme God. 2. Rum-thing-bo-
782 a-bo, the Supreme God. 3. Nyom, the daughter-in-law. 4. Rum-thing-bo-ta-gri-köb, the son of the Supreme God. 5. San-tug-kan-dro-mu (San-tug is a place below Algara; Kan-dro-mu is evidently like the Tibetan bKa-gro-ma, a sky fairy.) 6. Don-dyö-chi-log, another spirit who personifies both the intoxicating drinks, dyö and chi. Each of these six deities has on either side of it two servants who are called Bya-ro. Torma number 2, which represents the Supreme God, is the largest. It is about five inches high, of oval shape and is decorated with ten small lumps of butter as is shown in the drawing. Torma number 1, the wife, is smaller, being about four inches high and round in shape with the same decorations of butter. Tormas number 3 to 6 are similar to number 1, except that they are three inches high only. In front of this row are three Ka to, Tormas number 7, 8 & 9. In a squarish socket five cone shaped objects are placed. These are perhaps symbolical of the five-peaked mountain, but we could find out nothing more definite about them. Torma number 10 is a deity, Ka-to-sam or Gon-hiu-so. It is about two inches high, conical in shape, and decorated with streaks of butter. The Tormas of the Bya-ro servants are all alike, a little smaller and devoid of decorations. Before the table on which are placed the Tormas and the butter-lamps, there are five bamboo vessels and a wooden cup filled with chi. The cup, which stands fourth from the left, has its rim decorated with three little lumps of butter and is called San-dyö. We notice here again the names "chi" and "dyö" borne by the sixth deity. In front of these vessels there is a second small table, and six piles of rice placed on six banana leaf-plates lie on it. On top of each pile of rice are deposited a rib of the sacrifice and tiny pieces of the heart, liver, lung, spleen and kidneys. The number SIX is therefore a standard,—there are six principal gods, six chi containers, six piles of rice and six pieces of meat.

A banana leaf-plate containing rice is placed behind the skin on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh had been placed.

[Text continues on p. 63]

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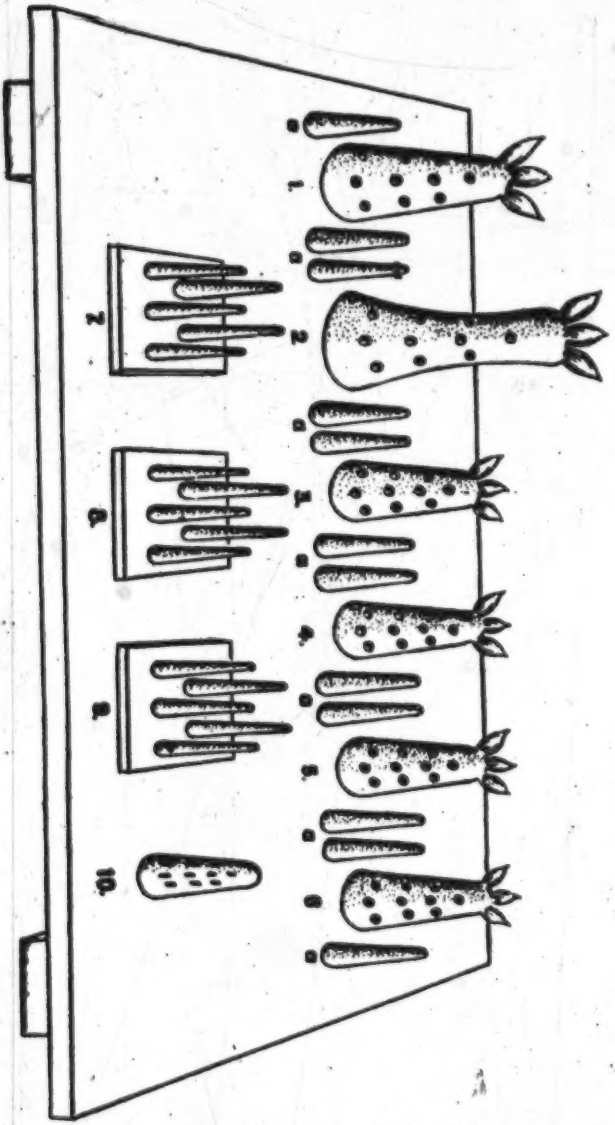

Fig. 20, Tormas of the gods

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Fig. 21, The cattle sacrifice

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On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miä song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

60. sa hor rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyär pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dzän dong däm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzän dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu däm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzän dong hiu däm dong hiu o! ön sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miä song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

776 I offer the smoke of incense. Come hither! To the father and to
755 the mother I offer gold Torma, I offer money Torma; I offer,
782 I offer, I offer incense to San tug kan dro mu; come hither!
I offer incense; come hither! I offer to Chi, the millet beer spirit, to the rice offering spirit, to Dyö, the millet beer spirit; come hither! Verify this, O God, that we are sick. Come hither and tell it; come here and say it. How the head is racked with pain, the loins ache, the body, the hands, the feet are paining and the belly is aching, this O God verify. Come hither and state it. How the demons bite that examine ye gods; come here and tell it. In this manner I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person. As a substitute for the body and the soul I offer this bull. I offer this substitute of life; I sacrifice this bound bull as a substitute for the body. I sacrifice this bound bull to Ge bu."[60a]

[539] 60a. nyom mu (Daughter-in-law of the Supreme God). yab yum pong Father, mother (Tibetan names for the whole family of the God.)

sang blong ga kög ma o! yab yum dyär pa dong
I offer smoke of incense! Come here! To Father, Mother I offer gold Torma.

gum pa dong dzän dong hiu fat ma o
I offer money Torma, I offer! I offer!

San tug kan dro mu sang blong ga kög gad mao.
To San tug Kan dro mu offer of incense! Come here!

plö blong ga kög gad mao!
offer of incense, come here!

chi log so log sang dyö ma djin blong ga
Millet beer (spirit), Rice offer (spirit), Millet beer (spirit) offer!

kög gad mao ao yu song dog non rum dyop ga plö buo dön ga
Come here! That we are sick, examine this O God now. Come here and tell us.

plö buo sareb song adyak non
Come here and say it. How the head aches,

achyang dog non me so dog non a go a tong dog
the loins pain, the body pains, hands and feet pain,

ta bak dog a yu rum pong dyop ga plö buo!
the belly aches. O God examine these things. Come here and tell it.

an sareb song mung nöng tzug bang ga rum dyop ga plö buo
How the demons bite examine that ye gods. Come here and tell it.

alom bö mad big djäk chim yu re söm
In this way I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person.

me sö löm sa lo löm big bu
As a body substitute, as a soul substitute I sacrifice this bull.

sok löm bu me sö löm
I sacrifice this substitute of life, as a body substitute

big djäk bu mo Ge bu long big long djäk bu mo.
this bound bull I sacrifice. To the Ge bu, this bull, this bound bull I sacrifice."

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal name is Chin-dŭn, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mŏn, his wife, Ta-dik-kŏb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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765 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of
782 another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa
776 dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation).
The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created. Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation, so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods
[774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods; dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gom shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar agag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö nöng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

mung gung man la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

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and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot(bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[539]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung ghum rum pong sug ngag la bam
to the water and the flood goods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.

dö dö dzum hi dzam uyong rum pong khing tzung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,

ayek alat rum pong dzö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,

ong hon pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life; if I know how to sacrifice, so

sug yu gong nön dö dö khing tzung go nöng sug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it; if I do not

nön dö dö a rö a riom plö cho djü la nag yö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know

gong la rum göm
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.

djö la nag ma yö nöng gong na mung göm
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.

dö dö sug la ma yöng gong na mung ni gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.

a lom sag döm ga ayek alat plö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here!

nyö ting sa rum göm go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,

ati adno nong ga su gad shö bu sa yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.

dö thing ga sing long fat sa yuk gom
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.

go yu sen nin sog döm ga chi log so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

755 rice-offerings. Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestors in ancient
782 times did—so do we now. We do not know how to speak in
776 this world; but we have arranged the sacrifice. As this world's life-spirit we, creatures, hold the branches of the Na sö and Na ling trees. We, the sons of Bong-thing, the Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. That is the place to carry the Na sö and Na ling branches which I take consciously. Now I swear an oath to Ta she tak bo thing. Therefore I push a stone into the earth and I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth (as witnesses of the oath). In this place I take the oath. I do it in our own interest. Today, in this very place I take the oath. The paths of the demons are barred. Through the wonderful powers of Ta she tak bo thing I offer this sacrifice. Henceforward we offer a compensation, a bodily substitute: Send no more suffering to this person."[61b]

[539] 61b. Fat bam a re a thing a niö sa dal thing gung dö si syit
Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestor did since ancient times,
plö nöng sug bam
so we also perform the sacrifice.
sog döm lyang ga go yusöng dön ma kön go yu rum
In this world we do not know how we should speak. We have arranged
tek so sog
the sacrifice (rum, god, has also the meaning of sacrifice). As this
döm löng ming tang ga son chio nin cho sa liang ga na sö na ling
world's life spirit we, creatures, hold here branches of the Na sö and Na ling
nom bong thing köb
trees (similar to the Nepalese Panisage and Sau tree). We, Bong-thing sons,

bong thing la mi köb nöng ga sog döm ga
we, Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. Here in this place carrying
na sö na ling nom hö nöng go tzam nöng ga.
the Na sö na ling branches, I take hold of them consciously.
ta she tak bo thing riak to long tzog.
To Ta she tak bo thing I swear an oath. I push a stone into the earth.
bu tzum bu yak to nön
I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth. (This ceremony takes place at the swearing and oath taking, so that the oath is sworn over the stone and the bamboo, which are placed side by side.)
sog döm riak to sön tön do ga
Here in this place I take the oath. In our own interest I do it.
sa rong sa ni riak are to nön sog döm ga
Just today I take the oath here. Thus here in this place
mung sa lom chat are tak bo she thing sa
the demons' ways are barred. Now through Tak bo she things' wonder-
a dyän sa löm nöng to Along ren me sü löm
powers, I bring this sacrifice. From now on, a bodily substitute, a
sa lö löm bo son areka gi dök ma bin
compensation we give. Send no more suffering to this person."

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. 782 Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, 776 however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim 773 that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner :

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyö. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[62] The world of the

62. "Fiang it dyö it
Chi's genesis, Dyö's intoxication genesis ! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked on as female ; dyö is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different than millet, and is looked on as a male). 539

lung tän o ba nang plö — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plö
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

Sang log pair of trees originated ! (Several holy trees are known. Na-sö and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sö-brio. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altag. The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

ang döm tam ga — son sa dän dog ga rum fig rum plö
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing sa a dyän rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tän
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing hob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tän plö
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — ung it — yang ming yang song !
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

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782 demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving
776 and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the
[773] tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grand-
children, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act.
Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner
[688] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart.
But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears,
gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of
good things. If we do not know how to act in the right
manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be
angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased
always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God,
the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god,
Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures,
perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the
rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of
abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[530] 62a. to pong sa lung tän rong köb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
döm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön ga tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin köb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top cho. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la söm du chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la sum kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog döm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dö do nio nyu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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If we accomplish a great amount of work in our fields we shall 782
obtain an abundance of things. Darmit (god) will always 776
grant us a happy destiny. If the lines in our foot and palms are worn out through much work, we shall obtain an abundance of things. If you do not understand how to work, you will not obtain the fruits of blessing. We honour Dar by an adoration of God. I shall perform this work until I sweat blood. Thus I work. A handful, a finger-tip-ful of the sacrifice is offered to the gods of procreation in the other life. Take it, O God, as many sacrifices. These are the fruits of the earth. All people together offer rice. When we sacrifice, many should do it together. That is the right way. God will then be at peace. But if we do not do it, then the gods of procreation will be displeased with us. We, living this life, must eat and work. If we do not work, God will not love us. The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.[82b]

82b. ayot top chio — dö do king tzum darmit na la go chio [539]
we shall obtain abundance. — A good fate, Darmit god will always grant us.

dyung dzum — gö dzum — säd dyet sug gan sa — ayot top chio
If our foot and hand-lines are all worn out through much works, we shall obtain abundance.

sug ma gön na mong — gong nö chiu
If you do not understand how to work you will not obtain

hop apot ma top na — rum sa chiong — dar sö chiong
the fruits of blessings. — As adoration of God we honour Dar.

alet sug vi ei flet nöng ga — sug bö nang yug sug
I will do this work till I sweat blood. — Thus I work.

mö tsö a ping ga — ayek rum ga — go ri go chion dza
In the other life to the gods of procreation, a handful, a fingertipful

apöt — rum ga blad nom pö tat chio
of the sacrifice is offered. — God, take it as many sacrifices.

apot sug dzum are ga bam — mang sa min de pö nöng
The fruits of this earth are of this kind. — All people together offer rice.

sa hö ting sa sug lang adyap — do sug gad gang na
When we sacrifice, then many should do it together. — Then is it right.

rum na la — ago ni chio — sug ma gön na
For God it will then be peace. — If we do not do it, then will the

ayek alat rum na la ga yum hium non ne. — tsö are ga bam ba sug la yo sam
gods of procreation be displeased with us. — We, living in this life,

la yong gad chio — sug la ma yu na — gang la rum na la
must work and eat. — If we do not work, then God will

ago ma mad ni rum pum thing hö do sa dön ga — lödnan chiong ta tsäd dö
never love us. — The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will
[761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[82c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who
[784] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 82c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tzäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tzäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe plö lad chiang gam anam anom aköb ason
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom li ma top sag ni rum sa sag ni tag nam che lat nam
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[63]

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

63. Report from Kalimpong.

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782 796 224 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit [784] over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[64]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god 773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

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Koeng was one of the beetle rope holders, for it was the 773
time of the year when he lives and sings for three months; the bak-dyol was another beetle who also comes out at this time, whilst the dyang-dyang (another beetle) was also alive, so he came too. So did Neprik-nyom, the grass-hopper and lots of other insects—all helped Tashey-thing who started climbing down the rope.

But almost immediately Mon-tsu-mot cut it, and all the animals and insects became so frightened that they ran away at once. Tashey-thing saved himself by holding on to the rock with one of the hairs from his moustache, and we Rong folk believe to this day that leaves from the bush we find hanging down from fry rocks, which has a grey colour like the tint of the thatching grass, and which is soft like hair, originates from the one hair that saved his life. He was wondering how he would release himself from his peril when a monkey happened to pass, who asked him what he was doing.

Tashey-thing told him he had come down to take some honey from the rock, but his wife, Mon-tsu-mot, with some animals and insects who had promised to help him, had played a nasty trick and cut the rope they had been holding.

So the monkey took him off the rock, and putting him on his back, told him he was to keep his eyes closed until he knew by the sound that he, the monkey, was walking; he was on no account to open them especially when they were rustling through the leaves.

Now when Tashey-thing was put down in a safe place, he told the monkey for a reward he would give him gold, silver or anything he asked for. But the monkey did not want gold or silver. 'Give me,' he said, 'a blessing instead, that will help me to have the first fruits of every field in harvest time.'

And Tashey-thing gave him the blessing.

But he cursed the rock bees, saying much trouble had come to him through them, and that it would be no sin for the Rong folk to take their honey away in future.

Then Tashey-thing planted a species of bamboo (the bling) and when it had grown big enough he made a bow from it, then he planted another bamboo (the pa-song) from which he made an arrow. Then for three years he followed

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773 the footprint of Mon-tsu-mot, and passing through nine countries and crossing nine ranges of mountains, he found the wild boar at last sleeping in a lair she had made from dry leaves. Then he aimed with his arrow and killing her, he collected firewood and commenced to burn her. Whilst he was roasting her, some hot fat fell from her body, and a drop falling on his thumb made him lick it off.

Then he cursed all wild boars, saying it would be no sin henceforth if the Rong folk were to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day, we can eat the flesh of the wild boar, which we never did formerly when she was Tashey-thing's wife. It was also then that the bow and arrow were invented.

Then being a widower, Tashey-thing married Gnyul-chul who was a fish, and said once as they came to a river he would carry her across on his back. Gnyul-chul did not like the idea and told Tashey-thing he ought to make a bridge. He made a bamboo one and just as they were nearly across, knowing she would annoy him, Gnyul-chul tumbled off his back and dropped in.

Then Tashey-thing became angry, and running downstream he placed a bamboo fishing net (a yet) in the middle of the river. Catching her on the third day, he found that the arms and legs of Gnyul-chul had become fins, whilst the rest of her body was still that of a woman.

The moment Tashey-thing had caught her he made a fire and burnt her. Some fat fell from her body, and dropped on his thumb which he licked off, and he cursed fish saying that from that day it would be no sin for a human being to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day we can catch and eat fish, which we did not do when a fish was the wife of Tashey-thing.

So he was once more a widower, and he blessed us the Rong folk and said we should be as abundant as the bushes and trees in the jungle, and that until the monkey died out there, we should not die out.

After blessing us, Tashey-thing returned once more to the country of the Rum (heaven)."[66]

[66] Stocks, op. cit. p. 381 sq.

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the
Rong was going through the forest when he came on what he
thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of
hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his
incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate
part of it; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said,
'You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your
children must serve me and worship me and make offerings
to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat
all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason
why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these
legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing,
gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food
and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game,
and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the moun-
tains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are
looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following
story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who
hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this
theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [53]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly
I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull
was asleep; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified
me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as
if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting
god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds.
The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing
drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We with-
drew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niu-big in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

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small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tschangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear.

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu.

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[87] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[88]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

87. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 122 sq.

88. R. G. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. R. Lyncy, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 120 sq., W. E. Theen, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 169 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 232, sq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 124 sq.

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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection. 776 [782]

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyous-fast to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice.

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

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The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyö, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dön-dyö-chi-log, who is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

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72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 346.

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273 796 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 273 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious effects ; for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 353.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796
estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [171]
Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons ; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796
to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782
his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773
ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 169 sq.

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796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[178] the commencement of all offering."[78]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[78]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[78a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

78. Stocks, op. cit. p. 366.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
78a. op. cit. p. 178.

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Jensen has reported, it is likewise evident, that they occurred as a repetition of that first killing, from which new life was engendered.

Thus it is clear then, that the slaughtering of cattle which Zarathustra again and again condemned, was the imitating and repeating of the indeed cruel, but—blessed killing of the original bull.

And in the closest connection with this, Zarathustra condemned in the same place the Haoma sacrifice, although, it is true he does not mention the name Haoma, but uses instead, an old unmistakable title of the Haoma.

This simultaneous mentioning of the Haoma endorses my opinion that with the words, 'the bull must be killed,' the sacrifice of the bull in the Mitra cult and its cosmic meaning are alluded to." This bull is said to be identical with Haoma.[77]

Very correctly does Lommel lay emphasis on the drawing of ethnological and prehistorical parallels for the explanation of the ritual. Our case is specially instructive for such an interpretation. The beliefs of the Rong and their rites prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the cult of the intoxicating drink and the cult of the bull are not identical, but are two altogether independent cults, and moreover that they are not the imitation of the original offering of the deity itself. Among the oldest ethnological tribes this mystification is not to be found ; but it is certainly so among the younger peoples especially among those with the peculiar mystery-religion. Others believe that the intoxicating Haoma has been supplanted by the milk-haoma which links with an old milk-mystery. The Mithra religion is Apolonic, sober, formalistic ; the Iranian Gatha-religion on the contrary, is Dionysiac, and is familiar with the Haoma delirium, with ecstacies, trances, and the wandering of souls in a state of trance.

Among the Indo-Iranians the Soma-Haoma sacrifice was performed in spring time for all the gods.[78] We have pointed out that exactly the same thing happens in the case of the Rong. The Rong-thing and the Mun, by partaking of

77. H. Lommel, Mithra und das Stieropfer, in Paideuma, Bd. III, H. 6/7, Juni 1949, p. 216 sq., p. 212.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 440 sq.

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171 Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

273 A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyō, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

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171 The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 63, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.
82. X, 34. 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

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potent that it even brought about immortality.[84] The motif of "Medicine of Immortality" which is widely circulated through the whole of Asia is an effective argument in this case. According to this, Soma was a kind of medicinal plant which grew in the highest mountains. 273 171

In those early days, no Indo-Aryans lived in this mountain world. It is more probable that from the very early time they obtained medicinal roots and herbs from the inhabitants of the mountains. In the Atharvaveda it is said, "The young maid of the Kirati race, a young damsel, digs the drug ; digs it with shovels wrought of gold on the high ridges of the hills."[85] The Kirati however are a people related to the Tibetans, as we shall see later on, and their name is identical with the Rai as we have mentioned above. The expression "kirata-tikta" occurs in Sanskrit and means "A very bitter medicinal plant." The name is preserved in the Prakrit as Cilaa-itta or Ciraa-itta ; in Old-Bengal as Cirayita and in New-Bengal as Cirata or Cireta. It certainly means "Medicine of the Kirata."[86] The Soma plant and its juice were equally bitter. It is reported that the Kirati provided the Aryans with Soma plants. If they grew in the high Himalayan mountains there was certainly no other way of obtaining the plants except through the natives who had a knowledge of medicinal herbs.

It is naturally impossible to produce a commonly used popular drink from a rare plant which had to be transported from a great distance. Oldenberg raises the same question from an altogether different point of view, "Has Soma ever been a favourite drink in the daily life of the Aryans ? I doubt it...In the Veda, Soma certainly was not a favourite drink, and it seems to me that the Avestic sources also teach this. The real intoxicating drink in the ordinary life of the ancient Indian peoples was sura...

Sura was put to sacred use at the ceremonies of the Sautramani as also of the Vajaya."[87] Even the Soma sacrifices were not numerous, or greater quantities of Soma plants would

84. op. cit. I, 91, 6 ; VIII, 48, 3 ; IX, 113, 8.
85. S. K. Chatterji, Kirata-Jana-Krti, Journal R. A. S. B. Vol. XVI, 1950. No. 2. p. 162.
86. op. cit. p. 163.
87. H. Oldenberg, op. cit, p. 366.

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273 171 have been used. "Only for a few, the celebrations of the Soma sacrifice could have been possible; where it was celebrated it could only have had for the masses of the people at most, the character of an incomprehensible play which they watched; the functions leaving the onlookers unmoved."[88] A drink so easily obtained and in general use, would not have so easily been linked with the "Drink of Immortality."

The Soma plants were ground down according to primitive methods on a stone plate by means of a stone, and later crushed in a stone mortar.[89] Then the juice was squeezed out. This juice was of a brownish, reddish, or greeny-yellowish colour. To purify this juice it was run through a strainer made of sheep's wool.[90] The Iranians used a strainer made of hair from the holy white bull. During the process three priests chant a monotonous hymn. The juice was very frequently mixed with water, milk or sour milk.[91]

It was poured back and forth into different barrels. All the manipulations would certainly cause the fermentation of the juice, as it did have an intoxicating effect.[92]

All this goes to show that Soma was quite a rare intoxicating drink. The ordinary intoxicant of the ancient Indians was Sura, which was also used for the purpose of the sacrifice. Here, too, we have an exact parallel with the Lepchas;—millet beer, Chi, is the ordinary stimulant which is generally used for the sacrificial purpose as it is easily obtained. Dyō is made from medicinal roots and is of a brownish colour. The alcohol content is high like some of our modern liqueurs. Because of the rarity of the roots, Dyō is not often manufactured and is less frequently used in sacrifices. Soma must have been extracted from some similar medicinal root. The Himalayan peoples gave it to the Aryans and handed over to them the recipe for making it.

This of course does not prove that the sacrifice of the intoxicating drink was introduced by the Aryans in this manner.

88. op. cit. p. 449 sq.
89. Rigveda IX. 67, 10, 107, 10; I, 28, 1-3.
90. Rigveda IX. 69, 9.
91. Rigveda VII. 3, 6.
92. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 457 sq., S. K. Godivala, Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1935, p. 6. sq.

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"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance. 273 171

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple. 773

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon 773 171

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 169.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.

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773 and cut it to pieces. Then he cleared the path for the waters
171 so that they could flow freely into the sea.[96]

Indra-Vrtra corresponds to the Iranian Tishtar-Apaosha. After the fight between them both had raged with unabated fury for three days, he appeared weary and about to give in. Whereupon he cried, "If men would perform sacrifices, I still could win." They therefore offered the Haoma sacrifice because of which the hero gained strength and conquered the demon. Indra had also obtained superb strength through the drinking of Soma. In the Rong myths the stimulant Chi had to be offered to God in order that he might be passified and let the floods abate. As the serpent is again linked in another way with the flood, the snake king as leader of the river Rung-nyo and the subsequent flood;—we do not believe that the Rong have, in this case, taken over Vedic Hindu myths, but have handed down, independently, their own legends, which are very slightly influenced by modern Hinduism.

The second motif is the saving of a pair or of a few people, who either saved themselves by taking refuge on a mountain-top or in a vessel. We have acquainted ourselves earlier with the Rong legend (page 40 sq.). In Atharvaveda (19·39·8) this event is recorded as having occurred in the Himalayas, "There was the arrival of the vessel ; there was the peak of the Himalayas ; there was immortality in sight ; there grows the Kushta grass." Shatapatha Brahmana (1·8·1/10) describes how Manu was saved in a ship. According to the Vendidad of the Iranians, Jamshed (Yima) was locked up in a "vara" by Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme God, in order that he might be saved from the great flood.

As the myths of the flood occur among so many Asiatic peoples (in the Near, Middle and Far East) there is no conclusive parallel about the saving of mankind as described in the myths of the Rong and Indo-Iranians. These legends could be drawn from several sources.

782 In the cult of the Rong, the sacrificing of bulls plays an outstanding part. For both, the living (during illness) and for the dead (in funeral ceremonies), the bulls must lose their

96. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 133 sq.

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 106.

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796 Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow.
782 These sacrifices are common among the different Naga
171 tribes.[101] Lepchas, who during the war came to these parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tedencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11·1·8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse ; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god,
[77] Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. C. R. Stoner, The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1950, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[102] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult.

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796 Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782 The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171 the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793 such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

102. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immense forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 462.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

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Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are 278
well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a [441]
deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrowhead but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, "Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from [143]
Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear [644]
them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the [226]
gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.

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005 them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters
224 and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These
[776] hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-shi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The
[225] Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

411 The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ⅔ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ¼ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched pin in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]

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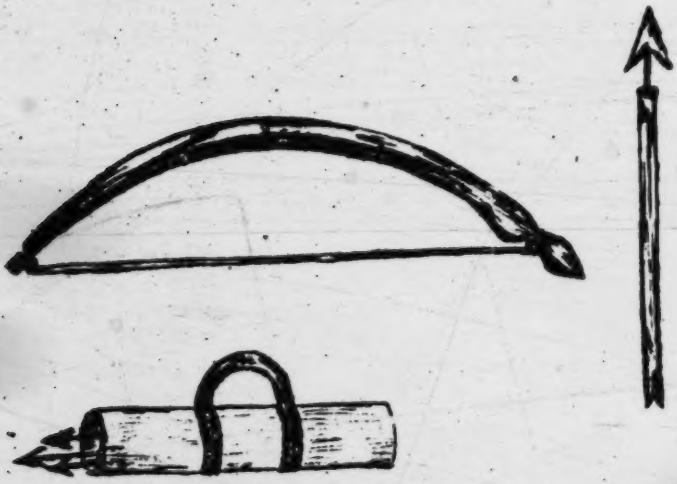
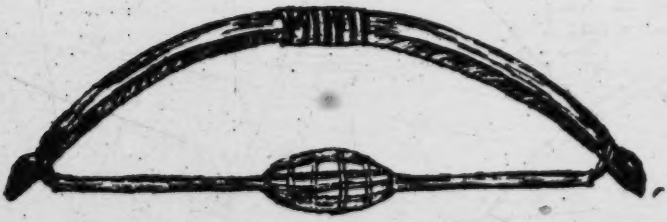


23 Lepcha bow, arrow, quiver



24 Lepcha bow for stone shooting

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411 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [123] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 60 sq.

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rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Nepalese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very elementary and they could by no means compete with the Indian and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

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231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

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places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[177] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[268] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[452] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[177] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

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farming must already have been effected by the Rong in very early times. 205 174

Gorer believes that the Rong were hunters about three hundred years ago, and that they carried on a little farming with dry rice and millet and kept a few cattle. When the Bhutanese and the Nepalese overran the land, the Lepchas withdrew into the forests, where they gave up farming and lived solely by hunting. When peace was restored they again took up to farming.[100]

(*l*) The Anthropological classification of the Rong

There are two basic types among the Lepchas which have to be clearly differentiated. The one with the long small face, the high forehead, the high narrow nose, and the well-defined eye-brow prominences; the eye is mostly without the Mongolian fold (if the upper lid droops it does not cover the inner corner of the eye). The face is also well-modelled; the cheek bones are not very prominent. The form of the head is mesocephalic or dolichocephalic. These people are taller and somewhat above the average height. The colour of the skin is light yellow. (Fig. 45). 142 141

The other type has a wide short face, a wide low forehead, well-defined supra-orbital ridges, a broad nose with depressed root and cheek bones that are somewhat more prominent. The eye often shows the Mongolian fold. The lips are thin, the shape of the head is brachycephalic, and the colour of the skin light yellow. Both the types have a slight growth of beard and a scanty growth of hair all over the body. The Mongolian spot occurs among most of the children of both types. The Lepchas call the spot "ri-om" and say that children without the spot are delicate. (Fig. 46)

The Rong have well-proportioned bodies. The muscles of the thigh and calves are particularly well-formed because of the fact that they are tireless mountain climbers. On the average however, the Rong are more lightly built than the neighbouring people. The women have very finely cut features.

100. op. cit. p. 110.

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144 174 In the anthropology of the Rong, a two-fold classification is shown : a Mongoloid and a non-Mongoloid element. Our investigation has shown us this two-fold element in the religion and the economy of the Lepchas. From an anthropological standpoint we would like to draw a line of difference between the hunters and the farmers, thus forming two typical groups. The hunters with their hunting religion, sociology and economy represent the tall Rong type and are characterised by the larger physical build, the long small face, the open eye and the long small high nose. The farmers, on the other hand constitute the second group with shorter physiques, broad faces, broad nose, Mongolian eyefold, and prominent cheek bones.

Thus we see that the Rong bear evidences of a mixed culture, and this helps to solve many contradictions concerning them. Some believe that they have connections with the Tibetans. Others say that they wandered from the east along the Burma-Assam mountains. Our own belief is that the hunting component of the Rong are the primitive indigenous inhabitants of the forests of Sikkim. The farmers came from the east and have connections with such people as the Naga, the Lolo and the Miau.

197 174 144 The Rong language belongs to the pure group, that is to say, to the pronounless Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman languages. This bears out the facts that they experienced no Austro-Asiatic influence in the language as the Limbu did. Consequently the Austro-Asiatics cannot be held responsible for the non-Mongoloid element among the Lepchas. The only possibility is that among the pure Tibeto-Burmans and in a wider sense among the Tibeto-Chinese, there is an element purely non-Mongoloid and another that is Mongoloid. The study of the Rong therefore throws light on the Mongoloid problem and shows a formation of the Mongoloids within the Tibeto-Chinese Family (Tibeto-Burman is the large sub-group of this family of languages) and, in a very marked manner, among the farming peoples. This is in perfect agreement with the results of our research in Tibet. I found that the Tibetan Mongoloids are represented among the farming population. The cattle breeding nomads have very few Mongoloid features or none at all. Hence it is that

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [153]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [167]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

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114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes : "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex ;
it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour ; it is regarded as almost as essential as food.
Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost
impersonal ; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal
relationships passionately adhered to between sexual part-
ners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts
and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
114 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who
562 is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 158 sq.

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in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110–159 not processed]

VIII

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19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

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Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

22. Lepcha hunter

[End Plate 8]

[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

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27. Lepcha farmer winnowing rice

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28. Lepcha shepherd with rain-cap

[End Plate 10]

29. Lepcha house

30. Lepcha house

[End Plate 11]

XII

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31. Lepcha house with stores

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32. Fenced Lepcha settlement

[End Plate 12]

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33. Lepcha woman

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34. Lepcha woman

[End Plate 13]

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XIV

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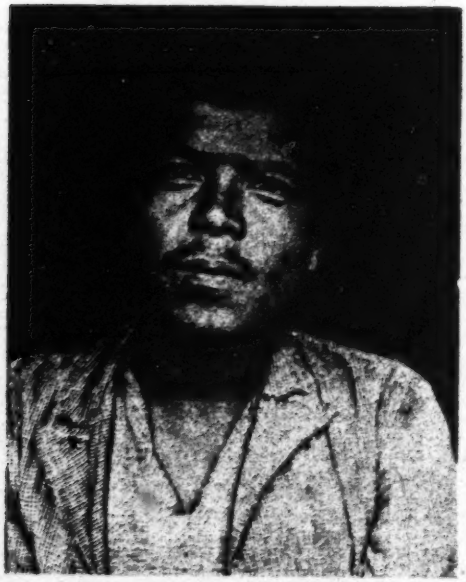
35. Lepcha young woman



36. Lepcha young man

[End Plate 14]

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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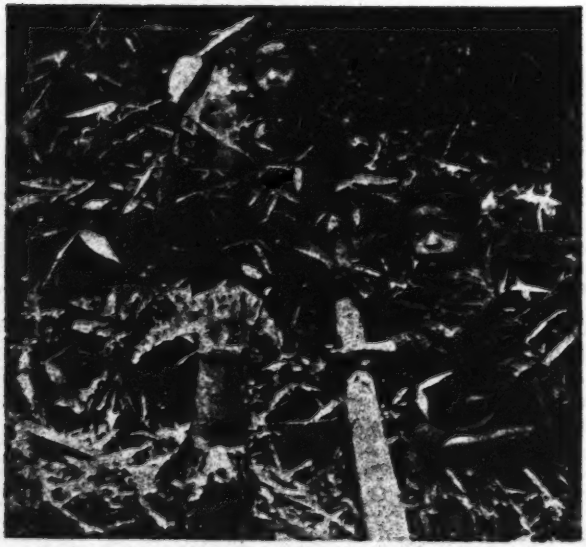

38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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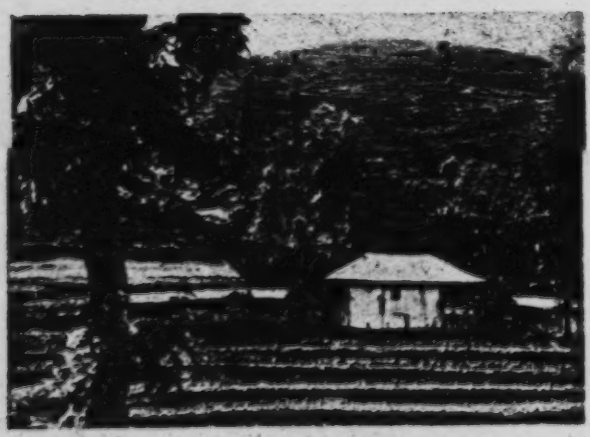

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

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291

42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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43. Lepcha girl carrying a baby

[302]

44. Lepcha girl

[End Plate 18]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

XIX

142
291
302

45. Lepcha man

46. Lepcha man

[End Plate 19]
[End Plates 20-38 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LIFE OF KURMA

i

[2] When I went to investigate the Lepchas one of the chief objects that I set myself was the collection, if it should prove possible, of the life history of one or more individuals. This seemed to me desirable for a number of reasons. It should be axiomatic that all sociology is based on the dialectical opposites of the society and the individual, and that any study which neglects either pole is thereby incomplete. Unfortunately, owing to the elaboration and specialisation of the distinct disciplines there has been very little contact between the psychologist studying the individual and the sociologist and anthropologist studying the group; the psychologist tends to treat the individual as though he lived in a vacuum, shared perhaps by his parents and immediate family, and they act as though the particular society of which the individual is a member were 'human nature' or 'natural circumstances'; they tend to ignore almost completely the cultural conditioning to which the individual, as a member of his society, has inevitably been subjected.[1] The sociologist and anthropologist on the other hand tend to ignore the individual as such, though they naturally pay attention to the special social functions of certain individuals placed by the society in conspicuous positions. Apart from these individuals of outstanding position, the mass of the population is classified into groups, usually according to one single aspect of the individual—their economic position, their religious beliefs, their type of work, their

[1] A notable exception must be made for the work of Dr. Margaret Mead and that of Dr. John Dollard of the Institute of Human Relations of Yale University. His two books—*Criteria for the Life History* and *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*—combine very significantly the study of the individual and his society. I should like to reiterate my very great debt to Dr. Dollard, for it was through his books and conversation that my attention was focussed on this particular problem.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

● 121 age or sex, and various other criteria. The working of the society is, as it were, studied from above and as objectively as possible. This non-participating attitude is undoubtedly necessary to get a complete view of the society in all its functions and ramifications; but if the study stops there it is impossible to interpret from such data the effect which the organisations studied have on the individuals who have to work them. We may learn a great deal about a given culture without having any estimate as to the results this culture has on its component parts, or the subjective importance of these parts to the individual. To give an over-simple example, any study of English life would have to devote considerable space to the very elaborate organisation and beliefs of the Church of England; it might also notice, though naturally more briefly, the value placed on a dirt-free epidermis and correctly buttoned garments. But no objective view could show how many people would prefer the close company of a professed atheist to a person who had patently not washed in the last fortnight, or whether an individual would be more discomfited by missing evensong or by entering a crowded room with all his trouser buttons undone. A good deal of interpretation is possible, especially in small communities, by intelligent observation and deduction, but such interpretation, however carefully documented, can always be suspected of misplaced emphasis and perhaps personal bias.[2] These objections inevitably disappear in an avowedly subjective autobiography of a member of the society. The individual telling his own story may be an exceptional one, but the emphasis and stresses are untouched by the preoccupations of the ethnographer.

A second advantage of the life history is that it is liable to give information on points which would otherwise be inevitably unobservable. Thus among the Lepchas it would be quite impossible for any stranger to observe the almost constant nagging in which women seem to indulge in the privacy of the family, for such nagging is immediately stopped in the presence of any stranger. I should have considered the women as apparently peaceful and contented as the men, did not this family nagging recur so frequently in people's autobiographies. Similarly the psychological importance

[2] It may be considered that I have exaggerated the use of the first person singular in this book. I think it preferable to allow my own bias to show openly and thereby be accounted for, than to pretend to the inevitably unobtainable attitude of Olympian objectivity. The ethnographer is as much part of the society he is studying (albeit only temporarily) as any other member.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of food would be almost impossible to estimate, if it were not for the fact that it is the central theme of so many individual memories. One of the chief justifications of the collection of life histories is given by the experience of my friend Mr. R. F. Barton,[3] who, on his third visit to the Ifugao, discovered through a life history a group of family gods with special observances of whose existence fifteen years life among the Ifugao with two long periods of objective investigation had given him no clue. 121

A third advantage of the life history, to my mind—though this point is of less immediate impact on sociology—is that it is a valuable corrective. There is at present a very obvious tendency in political and sociological thinking to ignore the individual in favour of his political or social functions; this dehumanising of social thought seems to me not only undesirable but also extremely dangerous; a great deal of the misery and distress in the contemporary scene appears to me to derive directly from the habit of thinking of people in groups instead of as individuals.

ii

Since I wished if possible to collect a life history, and since for various personal reasons my stay outside Europe could not be overlong, I was very lucky in finding in the Lepchas a society with a relatively unelaborated culture (outside the sphere of religion), and moreover one which was in no way fractionalised and of which no portion was guarded as a secret from the rest of the community. The energy which in other societies might have had to be directed to the discovery of magic or secret rites and initiations I was able to divert to the establishment of personal contacts. Moreover my preliminary study of the language in British India had given me a working knowledge of most of the formal arrangements of the society, such as the kinship terms and marriage arrangements, so that after the first month I was able to devote a considerable amount of my time to the non-formalised aspects of the culture and to try to get life histories. 124

Now to learn the story of another's life it is obviously necessary that the person who is telling his story should tell it willingly and have confidence in his listener; otherwise you will inevitably get lies and evasions. Here, too, I was served by the Lepchas' tendency

[3] Author of *Ifugao Law and Customs*, *The Rising Sun*, etc.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

quality; for if the existence of internal competition is a necessary preliminary to conquest (and it would seen inevitable that this must be so: aggressive wars can only be waged for extra booty or prestige on the part of individuals before the existence of the state) then the absence of internal competition is dysgenic as soon as the group which discourages it comes into contact with an aggressive group. As far as groups are concerned the process of civilisation could be described as a constant selection in favour of aggressiveness. Up till now aggressiveness has had a very definite survival value; so in their time did the mammoth's or the sabre-toothed tiger's tusks.

121 It may be argued that the Lepchas did not themselves develop feudalism because they have been conquered and are now the subordinate part of a feudal state; but that is no explanation of the fact that they have developed no form of organisation which would possibly be capable of developing into feudalism. Their neighbours the Nepali appear to have lived under the dominion of foreign (and therefore invading) kings from China and India for nearly two thousand years; in the early eighteenth century the Gurkhas nevertheless developed a complete feudal state.

So far have the Lepchas been from developing towards feudalism that there is no sort of native tradition of any historical or heroic chief; their biggest unit seems always to have been the village (or *ptso*—extended family group—if the *ptso* was, as seems possible, at one time a geographical unit) and one of the greatest weaknesses of their existing social organisation is the very limited power of control which the Mandal of one village can exercise over inhabitants of other villages.[5]

If my argument has been correct, the reason why the Lepchas never developed towards feudalism despite apparently adequate predisposing material conditions was that they did not sufficiently develop within their society competition and aggression. It is

society as a unit. By analogy I am comparing societies with animal species, but I do not wish to suggest that in any way their survival or disappearance is genetically determined. It is obvious that a conquered people, though they lose their specific culture, may be more fertile than their conquerors, and so from a biological viewpoint conquest may be eugenic.

[5] A case in point is the destitution of Kurma's mother after the death of her first husband, when the Mandal and people of Lingthem were unable to force the 'husband's younger brother', who should have inherited and supported her, to marry her because he lived under another Mandal. See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 388 and 394.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

necessary for some portion of a society to wish for power and distinction, for property and prestige, if the whole society is to develop a more elaborate form, feudalism. Engels and Morgan appear to have believed either that the transformation was an automatic ('historical' is their favourite synonym) process developing spontaneously from the change in the productive power of labour, or else that mankind was 'naturally' acquisitive and competitive. But feudalism means an increase in the size of the social group, and that increase can only, in the long run, be accomplished at the expense of other groups. Social evolution and the survival of certain groups is dependent, ultimately, on the amount of permissive internal competition and aggression; if the permissive aggression is excessive the society will be liable to fissurate and split into a number of internecine groups, incapable of combination; if it is defective the society will have no pattern for resisting alien intrusion. Save in the exceptional case when a materially primitive society comes into conflict with a materially advanced one social evolution is selective in favour of societies with an optimum number of aggressive individuals.

iv

One of the most futile and popular subjects of discussion is the nature and characteristics of the 'natural' man; in the course of two centuries philosophers and polemists have endowed this unfortunate abstraction with every sort of contradictory quality, according to the point which they wished to make. The subject is futile, for it is impossible to conceive man apart from some sort of society, no matter how small and undeveloped; as an animal man is born with certain biological urges and appetites, but the expression which these urges and appetites will assume is to a very great extent socially determined. As an animal man has to feed himself and to reproduce himself; what food he will eat and what mate he will get will be to a very great extent determined by the society of which he is a member.

It has seemed worth while to repeat this truism because the question of aggression, and especially the social control of aggression, is one which has been singularly neglected both by psychologists and sociologists. One of the reasons for this neglect is probably the fact that all the writers on such subjects were members of states, and one of the chief laws of any state is that the social control of aggression is the business of the state, and not of the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

offensive and defensive warfare; whether they develop this form of social behaviour would appear to depend to a great extent on the density of population in a given area. When agriculture has developed so far that one man's labour can produce sufficient food for more than the labourer (and his immediate dependents) slave-raiding becomes an economic proposition.

So far we have been considering aggression in its purely destructive aspect of fighting, competition and destruction. But I think that is far too narrow a definition of the term and that destruction and rivalry are only two of the aspects of aggression. I should like to suggest that aggression should be defined as one aspect of *the urge to obtain mastery over the environment*; this urge is universal, but the strength with which it is manifested depends on the individual temperament, and the forms its overt expression takes depend partly on the material circumstances and partly on the social organisation in which the individual is born. Aggression or mastery can be manifested towards objects and ideas (the supernatural, for example) as well as towards people, and it can be constructive or destructive; there is as much release of aggression in building or creating as in destroying.

121 With this wider definition of aggression Sumner's hypothesis that each society (or rather the individuals composing it) have to 152 externalise a certain amount of aggression takes on an added validity; but his 'other-groups' must be redefined to mean the external world and the supernatural, and not merely members of other societies. I should like to suggest the generalisation that the amount of destructive aggression manifested towards other men in primtiive societies is negatively correlated with the difficulty of maintaining life in the given physical environment or social organisation. In other words the harder the environment and the less material development there is, the less will destructive aggression be overtly manifested. Socially allowed destructive aggression is the product of economic security and leisure. If I am correct in this statement the type picture of the earliest men as uninhibitedly destructive and jealous until they were made tolerant, will have to be changed to that of hard-working and generally socially unaggressive men developing jealousy and fighting as they acquired control over their food supply and the dangerous animals in the environment. If this statement is correct the Lepchas' failure to develop any pattern of external aggression may be considered to have been conditioned by their isolation, their low material development, and the difficulties

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of wresting a livelihood from their environment. It would seem probable also that the environment has been responsible for keeping the operative social group a small one and in that respect may have been a reinforcing cause of the Lepchas' failure to develop towards feudalism. The small local and kinship group is now firmly implanted in Lepcha culture and it is interesting to note how, under contemporary settled conditions, the Lepchas still oppose all attempts to weld them into bigger units; their treatment of the new office of Muktair,[8] even though it was created by the powerful Court, is extremely illuminating.

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V

The reasons given above for the Lepchas' lack of destructive aggression outside their group may be adequate; the lack of aggression inside the group cannot be explained in such general terms. It is possible that since, in their major occupation of getting food, the Lepchas felt themselves more opposed by natural phenomena (personified into supernatural forces) than by other men, they to a certain extent carried the same attitude into their social life and regarded the supernatural, and not their fellows, as their chief cause for discontent. From the common-sense point of view it could be argued, as Sumner suggests, that in the small groups of which Lepcha society was composed the value of each individual worker was so great to the group as a whole that all potentially aggressive situations whereby the group might be threatened with the loss of the worker had to be avoided. Unfortunately it cannot be assumed of any human group that they act on common-sense reasons.

Though the reasons for the Lepchas' almost complete suppression of destructive aggression within their group would appear to be impossible to discover, it may be worth while noting their methods of doing so. This suppression of aggression can be viewed from two aspects: there are the social rules for its control, and there is the treatment of the new recruits to the society, the babies. From the social point of view, the most obvious is their strong social sanction against quarrelling; the Lepchas have not admitted a single situation in which quarrelling or vengeance-seeking is permissible. This may be regarded as a legal sanction against quarrelling. Next in importance from the legal point of view is the social arrangement of all sexual relationships so as to exclude jealousy. These arrangements have been detailed in Chapter Six but

[8] See Chapter Five, pp. 123–126.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

121 may be briefly recapitulated. Parents have no rôle in the sexual life of their children; exclusive sexual possession is legally impossible;
152 the younger are favoured against the elder (since they have access to their elders' spouses) and the elder are prevented from overbearing the younger by the equation of 'younger siblings'' spouses with children-in-law. Although nowadays not fully employed they have the legal device of repairing unsatisfactory marriages without the enmity of the two groups involved by exchanging the unsatisfactory spouse for another member of the same group.

In the Lepcha treatment of young children there seem to me to be two constant stresses of almost equal importance for the avoidance of overt aggression. One of these stresses has been already fully documented in Chapter Eleven; it is the immediate and willing satisfaction of all the infant's expressed physical desires. Save under exceptional circumstances, or through illness, the Lepcha infant does not apparently suffer to any appreciable extent from hunger, discomfort or cold. From the point of view of physical well-being Lepcha babies appear to experience the minimum of frustration and therefore it would seem that in the first months of life there are few experiences to evoke aggression. But parallel with this gratification of physiological appetites there is the considerable physical restraint which the babies endure through passing the majority of their waking hours firmly tied to the back of their guardian, and also the complete lack of encouragement which their elders give to the babies' earlier self-maximating activities and attempts to acquire body techniques and physical independence. Young babies get no social approval from their attempts to crawl and walk; on the contrary a mobile baby is more likely to be picked up and replaced on its guardian's back, since it is there easier to control. The two methods by which babies in our society would appear to win adult approval in their second year are successful sphincter control and the acquirement of body techniques and speech. Sphincter control is paid little attention to by adult Lepchas until a considerably later age, and attempts at acquiring body techniques are met with, at the best, indifference. Very young the Lepcha baby learns that social approval is to be obtained, not by self-assertion, but by passivity. The baby's self-maximating efforts are not actively punished, but they are discouraged by indifference; its passivity and conformity are constantly rewarded.

I think it is legitimate to trace a connection between this partial extinction of self-assertion in early childhood and the adult Lepcha's

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tendency to judge their fellows in their rôle of members of society, and not as personalities. This impersonal attitude to their fellows seems to me the chief operative factor for the suppression of competition and aggression in adult life. The Lepchas stress constantly social behaviour and minimise individual character variations. They stress the resemblance between individuals, they minimise their differences. This constant stress on the resemblance of individuals obviously makes for a low development of the ego, a lack of internal competition, a lack of contrast. The Lepchas minimise the most obvious contrasts, between rich and poor, between men and women, between lamas and illiterate laymen, to a great extent between adults and children. They recognise no social goals which can only be achieved at the expense of others, they have no social situations which separate rights and duties.

Although, as I have shown, this lack of personal aggression is dysgenic in the Lepchas' state of social development, the excess of personal and national aggression appears to be equally dysgenic in our own state of social development. To minimise this aggression will it be necessary for us too to view our neighbours impersonally, to tone down all the contrasts in personality, talent and achievement which have resulted in the greatest glories as well as the greatest horrors of our society? Or is there another solution?

[p. 452 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 age and was taught to believe that a measure of self-discipline was good for the soul. We never had a quarrel, but doubtless got on one another's nerves from time to time. In view of the fact that our life in Sikkim alternated between intense hard work and complete but unavoidable boredom this was almost inevitable.

114 These personal details would normally be of no interest to
121 anyone but our own selves. I have inserted them here, however, because, to me at least, it seems important in reading a description of a foreign culture to know how the writer fits into his own. It is almost impossible (and would be extremely dull) to describe the customs of a people entirely objectively; and so it follows that my description of Lepcha home life is inevitably coloured, and possibly limited, by my own outlook. I have concentrated on the things that interested me. Fortunately for us both, Geoffrey was interested mostly in other aspects and is writing a psychological study of the people from the Freudian and Marxist points of view. Our two books, therefore, while dealing (more or less) with the same subject, will have little in common; and in addition I have drawn on my notes and memories of previous journeys in Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet.

121 According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ethnography is the "scientific description of races of men." I can make no such claim for the following account, which, although the
[122] work was carried out under the auspices of the William Wyse Foundation (University of Cambridge), which awarded me its studentship in Social Anthropology, pretends to be no more than a plain unvarnished description of some four months' residence in a Lepcha village. It is not intended for experts and assumes no previous knowledge. The "scientific description" of the culture as a whole, in which we hope to collaborate, may possibly follow later, but will not be ready for some considerable time.

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11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121 ●
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [152]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [161]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 age and was taught to believe that a measure of self-discipline was good for the soul. We never had a quarrel, but doubtless got on one another's nerves from time to time. In view of the fact that our life in Sikkim alternated between intense hard work and complete but unavoidable boredom this was almost inevitable.

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* * * * *

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
●122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TEN

THE RHYTHM OF LEPCHA LIFE

i

000 Those travellers who mention the Lepchas in their accounts of their journeys in Sikkim and Tibet refer to them with startling unanimity as 'fairies' or 'elves' or 'woodland folk', according to the fantasy and self-consciousness of the different writers. The Europeans in British India who have had more prolonged contact with them stress as their chief qualities their mildness and truthfulness.

If one accepts Dr. Margaret Murray's account of the Fairies[1] as the original inhabitants of England who after the invasions of various conquering races lived in very hidden places and who were extremely timid in their contacts with the conquerors, the comparison of the Lepchas with the Fairies is extremely apt. The Lepchas who still retain a more or less integrated culture do live in relatively hidden and inaccessible places; they are remarkable climbers and walkers, they know the forest and its produce far better than any of their neighbours, and it is quite possible that they may appear in places where there is no visible path. They are pathologically 609 shy of strangers; a foreigner passing through their villages, were he to notice the scattered and inconspicuous houses, might well think them deserted. The first few days in Lingthem we scarcely saw a soul; walking about the village we saw only shut and smokeless houses, with a very occasional dodderer or infant. The majority of the inhabitants had simply taken to the forest.

● 123 After a time this timidity wore off. I insisted that all goods bought locally should be paid for without bargaining, so that they should not fear requisitions; if too high a price was asked the goods were to be refused. I stated that I had got medicines and could cure certain sores and diseases, and after a couple of bold people

[1] *The God of the Witches*, by Dr. Margaret A. Murray. London Sampson Low n.d.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

123 had been successfully treated a great number of people came for medicines and stayed to talk. People who came for their own reasons were given betel nut, cigarettes and sweet tea; those who came at my request and who stayed a long time were paid at the same rate as they would have been for a day's coolie work (eight annas); when I found their information particularly interesting I gave something extra as well. As far as possible I avoided the system of direct question and answer; nearly always some topic would arise naturally and I would let the speaker develop it as he wished; at other times I would suggest a topic. Only when a certain rapport was established did I start cross-questioning. The greater part of the conversations took place in the monastery enclosure, where there were a number of convenient outcrops of rock for sitting on; but some of the most valuable information was obtained casually on walks or through over-hearing conversations.

Once they got used to the shock of my arrival my presence did not, as far as I am able to judge, affect their actions or behaviour in any way, except possibly for an occasional affectation of modesty on the part of the women. At first nursing mothers used to cover their breasts in my presence, but after a few weeks they no longer bothered to do so. In so far as Lepchas divide humanity into 'inside our group' and 'outside our group' they placed me after trial in the former category. This is not to claim that they accepted me 'as one of themselves'; they certainly never did so; but they did not regard me as a dangerous stranger. I think they regarded me in three lights: as a dispenser of good medicine and other useful or pleasant articles; as an eccentric who asked questions to which everybody knew the answer, who paid for conversation, who made silly jokes in bad Lepcha, and—most peculiar of all—talked to and played with children; and finally, owing to the colour of my skin and the messages sent from Gangtok, as an honoured guest and, in a way, as a representative of the Maharajah. In this last aspect I was a slight nuisance; if we visited a house a special seat in the *dé-ong* was always prepared and *chi* served in the best container; a certain amount of deference and formality always marked the beginning of such visits. But although they were deferential they were never servile; nothing was done, as far as I could tell, with the intention of ingratiating themselves with me. If I wanted to speak to a person and that person was busy a message would be sent to that effect; if I wanted to be present at anything at which it was the custom that strangers should not be present

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) 123
or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised [152] me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a [515] different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you 431
go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *asék* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the 431
Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving 123
more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

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431 practically the only present I could give was money, which is not of very great use to them. I had frequent tussles with them on the 123 subject of payment for medical services; I insisted that medicine should not be paid for; they considered that it was shameful to take something for nothing and I frequently had to bully people with bad sores, which I knew I could cure easily, to come up for treatment; they were unwilling to do so because they thought they had nothing suitable to give as presents, and they were ashamed to take something for nothing. An interesting sidelight on their attitude towards gift-giving and strangers is shown by the behaviour of two of the bigger households who on my first arrival refused to sell to the servants either eggs or milk; and later when they got to know us used to come with presents of these commodities for which they refused to accept any return payment except after long argument.

123 When the Lepchas got to know me well they were not at all shy of asking for things; but except for cigarettes, betel nut and iodine or dressings for small cuts they always offered something in return for whatever they asked for and were in no way offended if their requests were refused. They were particularly attracted by illustrated papers and asked frequently to be given them; to a certain extent they recognised very clearly the objects portrayed in drawings and photographs, though their explanations to one another of the situations depicted were, as might well be imagined, very peculiar. I got far more amusement out of hearing three Lepchas explaining to one another what the pictures in *Punch* were about than I ever got out of reading that paper. One or two people asked for [726] pictures of special subjects; Rigya kept on asking for pictures of war because 'he was amazed at them and had never seen or thought of anything like it'; Chudo liked pictures of cars and fashionable life, for he had spent nearly a year in Gangtok as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchens and knew about the lives of Europeans and was able to explain them to his less fortunate compatriots. For him European life consisted chiefly in extremely formal and uncomfortable meals at which there was never enough to eat, interspersed with quarrels of an extremely dramatic nature. In one of the numbers of the *Illustrated London News* there were several reproductions of Chinese Buddhist frescoes and there was quite a competition to possess these among the older and more pious lamas. After I had had some photos enlarged and had shown people their photos I was bombarded with requests for photos of individuals

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nd groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes 123
nd stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be
hot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking
hrough the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses;
eople would return again and again with their friends with demands
o look through these wonderful appliances.

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers
o amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to
whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers
n an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking
t them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed
out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled
voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at
hem and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made
hem grow' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow', or
else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when
I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say
'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions
asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always
replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils
and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them;
but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined
and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to
them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the
brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained
in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the
paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small
squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; 867
after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts
among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of 123
barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be 431
divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the
Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put
the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the
glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry
flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later
those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a
share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only
children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership
of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four

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867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
346 alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

● 123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

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123 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
[491] suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

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ghty people, including men, women and children, would 527
present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
d on some occasions would continue the party well into
e following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
om nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
ere almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
il.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
he people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
vn food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
om Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
epers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
ice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
epchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
imitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
ent there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
ardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
only learned this later) the people were merely away
orking in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
scovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
crepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
n with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
lage soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
er we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
formants and someone or other usually came each morning
talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
lage by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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123 spend most of our time with such of the people as were really willing to talk. One or two were genuinely interested in their history and customs and with them we spent most of our days.

I had been taught at Cambridge to avoid asking questions: the ideal method was so to observe and absorb a culture that mere questioning became almost superfluous. It was essential to live in close contact with the people. In our particular case, however, this was not possible. Even had we chosen to live with a Lepcha family we should have been in no better position to observe what was happening at the other end of the village: its very grouping militated against working in ideal conditions, however long we stayed. When we got to know the people better we did of course visit them in their houses, and were always present when a ceremony was being performed. There is much to be said for "going native" and I have always envied those whose digestions can stand it. The alternative method, however, does permit one to see things from a completely detached standpoint, whereas the "native" soon learns to take many things for granted. After all, how many of us could explain our own culture to a Lepcha, for instance, in such a way that nothing was taken for granted?

We would usually start a conversation on some selected topic; but once an informant was well away we let him have his head. Thus, we might start with war and finish with abortion: all was grist for the ethnological mill. The following account is built up from such oddments of information; an uncompleted jigsaw with doubtless many pieces wrongly placed. Its main pattern, I hope, is clear, but I make no claim to be infallible. In any case I must again remind the reader that this is a purely personal account, tinged with my likes and dislikes. I have tried as far as possible to be objective; but like Mr. Dick I, too, have my King Charles's head.

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114 that closed land was not forthcoming; so, as an alternative, he got the permission of the Maharajah of Sikkim to study the Lepchas in his country. During the whole of the visit Mr. Morris was my companion, and it was thanks to him that I was able to ignore both the practical and administrative difficulties in a strange land and under strange conditions which would most probably have proved insuperable to me unaided. Through his long-standing friendship with the Maharajah we not only obtained the permission to live indefinitely in Sikkim—a permission not easily obtained—but also his active collaboration in the choice of a site to work in and the co-operation of all the people, official and unofficial, directly or indirectly involved. I find it difficult to express adequately my sense of great indebtedness to Mr. Morris; his knowledge of local customs, both Native and European, were of inestimable help.

000 It was also through my book *Africa Dances* that I met Dr. Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Ruth Benedict of Columbia University, and Dr. John Dollard, of the Institute of Human Relations, Yale University, New Haven. Under the guidance of Drs. Mead and Benedict I spent the winter of 1935–36 studying the methodology and theoretical background of anthropology, and from Dr. John Dollard I learned to see in focus the interrelated problems of the individual in society. It is quite impossible for me to estimate my intellectual debt to these three inspiring teachers, and I have also to thank them for a very great service; for they undertook the great burden of reading the first draft of this book, commenting on it and advising me on a number of points. The sacrifice of their time by these hard-working people is a gift of inestimable value; my only hope is that this book is, to some slight extent, not altogether unworthy of their pains. If this should happily be so, it is almost entirely owing to their instruction and advice. I must also thank very sincerely Mrs. F. Norman, of the Department of Psychological Medicine, of Guy's Hospital, London, for having read the first draft of this book, advised me upon it, and discussed it with me; her help, particularly in Book Two, has been very great.

●124 I arrived in India at the very end of 1936. Before going into Sikkim I spent two months in Kalimpong studying the Lepcha language with the help of missionised Lepchas. At the end of that period I had an adequate comprehension of the language, but, though I could understand everything that was said with, I think,

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most of the over-tones, I never spoke it more than very haltingly. 124
Lepcha is a simple language structurally, but the labour of learning by heart several thousand vocables which it was impossible to connect with any language system I knew was a hard one. Fearing my working knowledge of the language might be inadequate I therefore took with me into Sikkim as an interpreter a young Lepcha named Sukra Singh who was being trained as a dispenser. His knowledge of English, though not profound, was adequate, and I was always able to check up on his not infrequent mistranslations. In the event, the presence of this interpreter proved very useful. The Lepchas have a tendency to monologue, for one 124
person to speak continuously while the rest listen. If I can so 521
express it, the Lepchas talk in paragraphs, and not in single sentences; they fall naturally into a long swinging rhythm, and much dislike being interrupted or held up in the middle of a narrative or anecdote. I found I could not possibly keep up my notes and a conversation at the same time; but the Lepchas found it an easy matter to make a long statement and then pause while the statement was repeated. Since none of the Lepchas of Lingthem had had 124
any but the most casual contact with Europeans—indeed most of the men and all the women had never seen one before—they had no set ideas of the way Europeans behave. They have however in their mythology and stories the tradition of nobles (into which group we naturally fell as being under the protection and recommendation of the Maharajah) being accompanied by servants, and doing all business through their intermediary. Without the use of an interpreter who, with his repetitions which I hardly listened to, would slow down the pace of a conversation sufficiently for me to take full notes, I could never have taken down the life-histories and elaborate ritual in anything like such full detail. When he was not present I had to ask people to wait, or to repeat themselves; the Lepchas disliked this, just as much as they disliked questions demanding a direct answer; they were quickly disconcerted and lost the thread of their narrative. Until I knew people well I asked as few questions as possible; as far as possible I checked and counter-checked every statement, but this was mostly done spontaneously by different Lepchas discussing identical subjects, or by their arguing among themselves. The most I would do with strangers was to suggest a subject for discussion; I only cross-examined those people with whom I had already a confidential relationship.

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124 I am aware that the use of interpreters is held to invalidate a great deal of anthropological work; but the Lepchas got used to Sukra Singh—a person of endless patience and constant good temper—as soon or sooner than they did to us, and I question whether his absence would have made for any greater intimacy. I was never really dependent on him, and, without his slowing up the pace of conversation, I could never have got the almost word for word texts that I obtained. When he was not with me I found myself quite incapable of taking sufficiently full notes; and those I made from memory subsequently inevitably lacked the clearness and precision of those I took more normally. Unless I had invented some form of Lepcha shorthand or employed a dictaphone my work among the Lepchas would have been far less detailed; only when talking to children or to big groups was the presence of my interpreter useless or a hindrance.

I have put a few notes on the Lepcha language into an appendix[1] for the benefit of those who are interested in such matters and also a vocabulary of those Lepcha words which I have been forced to employ in the text. I have avoided using Lepcha words as far as possible, and have given no Lepcha texts; I am unable to understand the reasoning of those anthropologists who consider that the inclusion in an English book of sentences in a language which not one reader can understand gives the study greater scientific or objective value. My own feeling is that the value of texts is almost entirely linguistic; and so for the use of philologists I propose to deposit a few selected texts (stories and prayers) with my Lepcha vocabulary with the School of Oriental Languages, London.

114 I lived in Zongu among the Lepchas during March, April and May 1937. Frequently in this book, in order to avoid clumsiness, 128 I have used the present tense and referred to different periods as 'now', 'three months ago', 'ten years ago.' In all cases the point of reference from which time is measured is the spring of 1937.

In India and Sikkim I received kindness and help from so many people that it is difficult even to enumerate them all. The many people who have experienced the great and unfailing kindness and hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Odling of Kalimpong will understand that I can find no words to express my gratitude to them; you cannot thank people who have given you a home. I should also like to thank very sincerely His Highness Sir Tashi Namgyal, K.C.I.E., Maharajah of Sikkim, for his kindness and

[1] See Appendix VI.

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773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[421] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
● 124] their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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x159 Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to
756 woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about
[778] his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma
[124 arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though
577] once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving
[732] children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

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of food would be almost impossible to estimate, if it were not for the fact that it is the central theme of so many individual memories. One of the chief justifications of the collection of life histories is given by the experience of my friend Mr. R. F. Barton,[3] who, on his third visit to the Ifugao, discovered through a life history a group of family gods with special observances of whose existence fifteen years life among the Ifugao with two long periods of objective investigation had given him no clue. 121

A third advantage of the life history, to my mind—though this point is of less immediate impact on sociology—is that it is a valuable corrective. There is at present a very obvious tendency in political and sociological thinking to ignore the individual in favour of his political or social functions; this dehumanising of social thought seems to me not only undesirable but also extremely dangerous; a great deal of the misery and distress in the contemporary scene appears to me to derive directly from the habit of thinking of people in groups instead of as individuals.

ii

Since I wished if possible to collect a life history, and since for various personal reasons my stay outside Europe could not be overlong, I was very lucky in finding in the Lepchas a society with a relatively unelaborated culture (outside the sphere of religion), and moreover one which was in no way fractionalised and of which no portion was guarded as a secret from the rest of the community. The energy which in other societies might have had to be directed to the discovery of magic or secret rites and initiations I was able to divert to the establishment of personal contacts. Moreover my preliminary study of the language in British India had given me a working knowledge of most of the formal arrangements of the society, such as the kinship terms and marriage arrangements, so that after the first month I was able to devote a considerable amount of my time to the non-formalised aspects of the culture and to try to get life histories. 124

Now to learn the story of another's life it is obviously necessary that the person who is telling his story should tell it willingly and have confidence in his listener; otherwise you will inevitably get lies and evasions. Here, too, I was served by the Lepchas' tendency

[3] Author of *Ifugao Law and Customs*, *The Rising Sun*, etc.

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124 to monologue, to recount anecdotes, to illustrate a theme by their own past experiences. I soon noticed that Kurma had a particular tendency to do this, and also that he was flattered by my obvious interest in what he had to say. After we had been in fairly continuous contact for about a month I asked him to tell me what he remembered of his childhood. He did so willingly, and thereafter it was easy to bring him back to the subject of his own past life by asking a single leading question. 'What happened after you did so-and-so?' 'What happened to so-and-so?' While he was telling his story I asked practically no questions at all; I kept all queries for subsequent meetings when impersonal subjects would be discussed, when I would interject them without apparent emphasis. Altogether about six full days were passed mainly in the discussion of Kurma's own life; I should undoubtedly have had more material if he had not first been summoned to visit his parents-in-law and on his return been taken ill with fever. Besides these special sessions Kurma would often introduce apposite anecdotes of his own past life, both before and after I had started getting his story.

With Kurma, more than with any other individual in Lingthem we managed to set up a pattern of mutual obligations. As *gyapön* he had been charged by the Mandal to look after us, especially in the matter of getting provisions; he enjoyed the reflected importance of his contact with Europeans, and I flattered him by appealing to him somewhat more often than was necessary. He was anyhow more disposed to talk than to work and was very amenable to cajolery.

I did not like Kurma very much and had not very full confidence in him. I repeatedly tried to trip him up by asking him identical questions at considerable intervals of time, and to check up on him by questioning other people. Actually my distrust was practically unfounded; only on one major point—the death of Banyok—did I find him completely incorrect, and at a later date he voluntarily retracted his first version.

[157] Both through temperament and circumstances Kurma was an a-typical Lepcha. In temperament he had an unusual desire for power, was boastful, and had decided sadistic traits. Sociotically he was unfortunately circumstanced and his treatment of his circumstances was unusual. His mother appears to have been exceptionally poor and his adopting parents exceptionally unkind. Adoption is of itself statistically rare—only eleven people out of the 176 in

124 547

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lingthem were or had been adopted; and Kurma is unique in having completely abandoned his adopting parents to return to his biological parents. Again as a person with two elder brothers Kurma is unusual in having become head of the household at an early age and in having had the heavy economic burden of seven funerals in a fairly short stretch of time.[4] He is also unusual in having started with an irregular sexual union, and extremely unfortunate in the mortality of his wives.

Nevertheless, despite his unusual character and circumstances, I believe that Kurma's life-story, incomplete though it is, gives a good illustration of the dynamic workings of Lepcha culture and an adequate cross-section view of Lepcha society. By developing the themes which he touches on,[5] sometimes very cursorily, one would have an almost complete picture of Lepcha social arrangements; if it were not for the awkwardness of such an arrangement, all the preceding chapters of this book could be used as amplification for Kurma's story.

I am giving the notes in the form in which I took them. The portions in quotation marks are nearly *verbatim* transcriptions; I could not, however, always write quickly enough to take down every word, and I have omitted the repetitions which swell out all Lepcha stories. The portions told in the third person are chiefly incidents which cropped up in the discussion of other matters.

Although I have not altered the notes in any way I am presenting them in more or less historical order, which is not that in which the information was given to me. To simplify reading I am giving cross-headings, and a few explanatory notes. For those points in his narrative on which I questioned other people and on which their versions differed considerably from Kurma's I have presented the alternative versions in brackets and italics. For ease of reference I am also giving overleaf a calendar of the more or less well-established dates in Kurma's life and the names and dates of birth and death of his immediate family. To bring his story up to date I have put after his narrative a journal of his doings during the period when I was observing him.

[4] The only people in Lingthem similarly circumstanced were Nariya and Rigya, and they were economically far better able to stand the strain.

[5] I have omitted in the following pages all the impersonal material (ceremonies, etc.) which Kurma incorporated in his story.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE FIRST DORJÉ LAPOON, HIS FAMILY, AND JIROONG

i

124 It is not enough to wish to collect life-histories; it is also necessary to get people who are willing to tell them. I very much regret that I was not able to obtain in any comparable detail the story of a well-adjusted Lepcha, to contrast with that of Kurma with his obvious maladjustments. But I think it was just his maladjustments which made him so remarkably communicative; his feeling of inferiority and ill-treatment, his consciousness of being somewhat different to the rest of the community led him to place more confidence and spend more time with strangers than a well-integrated person would be likely to do.

I have already said that I consider Chala Mandal and Tafoor to be the best-integrated Lepchas in Lingthem; I saw a great deal of both of them—Tafoor was almost my most constant and altogether my most reliable informant—but my attempts to get them to tell their own stories were almost completely unsuccessful. They both had very little self-feeling; they envisaged their relationships with others entirely practically and objectively, apparently untinged by emotion. Their feelings towards others were always rational, and their accounts of their dealings with them consisted of long lists of mutual help and benefits, with very great emphasis on the food given and received.

I did get short accounts of their past lives from a number of people; some of them have already been given (e.g. Gongyop's story in Chapter Eight, Rigya's in Chapter Fourteen, and so on) in full, and small excerpts have been made from others which are not full enough to be informative. Since, however, I feel that Kurma's story by itself would give an over-biased picture, I propose to give as a counterbalance the interrelated stories of the first Dorjé Lapoon, of his son Datoop and of his wife and family, and of Jiroong, whose first wife the first Dorjé Lapoon stole.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

124 The first Dorjé Lapoon I saw very little of, and his history was told to me, partly by Kurma, and partly by his son Datoop. He was a very old man and spent most of his time alone in the field-house where he lived looked after by his younger son. I also learned from Kurma that portion of Jiroong's life which was involved in the scandal of his first wife and the Dorjé Lapoon, and also the story of Jiroong's sister. The greater part of Jiroong's life and all the rest of the stories were got from the people themselves. It is worth remarking that, although these people are all less obviously maladjusted than Kurma, they had all except Jiroong had the unusual experience of living some years outside Zongu.

The first Dorjé Lapoon, Datoop and Jiroong were all lamas; Datoop was by far the most pious. Jiroong was a lama through his horoscope and not through birth, and appeared to attach rather more importance to the Mun ritual; in his house his sister always officiated. Mrs. Datoop was a very strong character, and overbore both her husband and her son Pembu. Jiroong was also dominated by his wife.

The accompanying genealogies should make the rather involved relationships clearer. (See page 417).

ii

The first Dorjé Lapoon.

X 159 588 The first Dorjé Lapoon, now aged eighty-two, has been his whole life long poor, lustful and shameless. As a young man he was married to his first wife, but after three years he left her because he wished to marry another woman, one Lungdeumu, his classificatory aunt.[1] He was told that he and she were too closely related for them to marry; but he was shameless and persisted in the marriage. Since the consanguinity was all through the female line no social action other than expressed disapproval was taken against this incestuous match.

X 159 Lungdeumu was the mother of his son Datoop, who was born in 1881. As soon as the child was born the Dorjé Lapoon took a dislike to his wife and went away to Darjeeling for a year to work there. On his return Lungdeumu's brother tried to induce him to return to his wife but he refused. Thereupon Lungdeumu's brother said 'You are no longer responsible for my sister; I shall give her in marriage again, and you will have no claim on the bride-price.'

[1] Her mother and his maternal grandmother were biological sisters.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191
Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these 197]
were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534]
earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 horribly familiar strains of "Abide with me," slightly out of
124 tune, issuing from the house next door in which he and the servants lived. I never made any effort to restrain him, for which I hope to receive due credit in any future existence which may be my lot.

Sukra Sing was what in India is technically known as a "compounder," which means that he had worked in a hospital for some months, knew a certain amount (in his case a dangerous amount) of simple doctoring and first-aid methods, and was authorised to "compound," or make up medicines to prescription, without, however, being responsible if he inadvertently confused aconite with aqua. He [177] was also under training as a missionary and was working under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries are rightly interested less in obtaining "scalps" than in improving the people's condition, the only possible excuse, in my opinion, for missionary work amongst primitive peoples. I shall have more to say about missionary activities later on in this book; but in the meantime I cannot help thinking that Sukra Sing will now go out into the field with considerably more tolerance for his "uncivilised" Lepcha brethren than would otherwise have been the case. He was fortunately not musical, but showed signs towards the end of our stay of a wakening interest in the flute. Dhawa, however, preferred to play solo.

* * * * *

114 We left Gangtok without any very clear idea of our exact
636 destination. His Highness had suggested Jongu as being the most suitable place in which to commence our studies; and so to Jongu we set off. No one was quite sure of the exact position of this place; nor was the Ordnance Survey map helpful, for it omitted all trace of this, to us at least, important place. On arrival at Mangen, however, where we were to leave the main trade route through Sikkim, the mystery was solved, for it there transpired that Jongu was not a village but a district; a district, moreover, which stretched from roughly

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

124 I am aware that the use of interpreters is held to invalidate a great deal of anthropological work; but the Lepchas got used to Sukra Singh—a person of endless patience and constant good temper—as soon or sooner than they did to us, and I question whether his absence would have made for any greater intimacy. I was never really dependent on him, and, without his slowing up the pace of conversation, I could never have got the almost word for word texts that I obtained. When he was not with me I found myself quite incapable of taking sufficiently full notes; and those I made from memory subsequently inevitably lacked the clearness and precision of those I took more normally. Unless I had invented some form of Lepcha shorthand or employed a dictaphone my work among the Lepchas would have been far less detailed; only when talking to children or to big groups was the presence of my interpreter useless or a hindrance.

000 I have put a few notes on the Lepcha language into an appendix[1] for the benefit of those who are interested in such matters and also a vocabulary of those Lepcha words which I have been forced to employ in the text. I have avoided using Lepcha words as far as possible, and have given no Lepcha texts; I am unable to understand the reasoning of those anthropologists who consider that the inclusion in an English book of sentences in a language which not one reader can understand gives the study greater scientific or objective value. My own feeling is that the value of texts is almost entirely linguistic; and so for the use of philologists I propose to deposit a few selected texts (stories and prayers) with my Lepcha vocabulary with the School of Oriental Languages, London.

114 I lived in Zongu among the Lepchas during March, April and May 1937. Frequently in this book, in order to avoid clumsiness, 128 I have used the present tense and referred to different periods as 'now', 'three months ago', 'ten years ago.' In all cases the point of reference from which time is measured is the spring of 1937.

000 In India and Sikkim I received kindness and help from so many people that it is difficult even to enumerate them all. The many people who have experienced the great and unfailing kindness and hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Odling of Kalimpong will understand that I can find no words to express my gratitude to them; you cannot thank people who have given you a home. I should also like to thank very sincerely His Highness Sir Tashi Namgyal, K.C.I.E., Maharajah of Sikkim, for his kindness and

[1] See Appendix VI.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

-operation; and also Rai Sahib, Tashi Dadul, the Private Secretary His Highness, Rai Sahib, Sonam Dadul, Rhennock Kazi and ficial Steward in charge of Palace affairs; the Honourable Mary cott, D.D., of Gangtok, and the Very Reverend Dr. J. A. Graham, .I.E., D.D., of Kalimpong, all of whom gave me much help and lvice. My thanks are also due to Sukra Singh for his unfailing tience and good temper in situations which would have disoncerted many more sophisticated people.

I have attempted within a single volume to give an adequate escription of Lepcha society and in particular of the village of ingthem; to avoid undue length I have had to suppress a conderable amount of minor detail, but I hope that I have done this ithout obscuring or falsifying any facts. The religions I have in rticular dealt with very summarily, for a full treatment would quire a second volume comparable in size to this one, and would eavily overweight the picture I am trying to present. The volume divided into three books, each of which represents to some extent different method of description; in Book One I have presented e material and formalised aspects of Lepcha society, in Book wo the mainly unformalised aspects of Lepcha life, and in Book hree the history of certain individuals. I have tried to make a tal picture by presenting three view-points: the frame-work of e society, the impact of the culture on the people, and the indiiduals who are the product of that culture and society. I have mployed, to the best of my ability, the various disciplines, nthropological and psychological, functional and Freudian, which eemed apposite to the aim I had in mind; I have used them clectically, for most of the disciplines seem to me useful and none f them completely adequate alone. My methods of working and y attitude to various aspects of anthropology are described in ppropriate places in the text, particularly in Chapters Ten and eventeen. In Chapter Seventeen I have attempted to answer ome of the problems raised by my study of the Lepchas.

It has seemed to me that many sociological works appear to eglect the individuals who compose the societies they are decribing; in so far as I claim any novelty in the treatment of the ubject-matter of this book, it is in the fact that I have let the epchas speak for themselves, that I have tried not to forget that he village of Lingthem is inhabited by one hundred and seventy-six ersons, and the reserve of Zongu by about two thousand. I have ried to illustrate every statement from the lives of the people of

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

[*Lamaism, or, as it is sometimes called, Mahayana Buddhism, is a subject of the greatest complexity, to the study of which scholars of world-wide repute have devoted their whole lives. Its organisation is as elaborate as that of the medieval Catholic church, its hagiology, demonology and ritual are infinitely more complicated, and it is split into nearly as many sub-sects as contemporary Christianity. My ignorance of Tibetan prevents me discussing it in any great detail. Among the Lepchas of Zongu the practices of lamaism present more variety of detail than any other single facet of their lives; my notes on lamaist ritual far exceed those on any other subject. I had at one moment considered comparing the lamaism as I saw it practised in Lingthem with the accounts given by other people of more orthodox practices in unmixed lamaist communities, but even confining myself to those rites at which I was present, I soon discovered that the bulk of the material involved would be out of all proportion to its place in the social and religious life of the Lepchas. I have therefore limited myself to a generalised account of the impact of lamaism on the life of the Lepchas of Zongu; in practically no instances have I given the details of ritual or of the fabrication of ritual objects, not because I do not know them, but because they would overweight what is from my point of view a subsidiary subject. To a lesser degree these remarks also apply to the rituals of the Mun and to the extremely elaborate mythology and folklore derived from both religions. Possibly in the future (I hope with the collaboration of Mr. C. J. Morris) I may publish the full details of the ritual and belief of both religions in a different work.*] 771 128

i

The discussion of the Lepchas' religion is rendered extremely complicated by the fact that they practise simultaneously, and without any feeling of theoretical discomfort, two (or possibly three) mutually contradictory religions: of these the older Lepcha 771 756

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DEVIANTS AND DEFECTIVES

i

128 Except when I have used individual illustrations the four chapters
157 of Book Two have been written about an abstraction called 'the average Lepcha'. Of course such an abstraction has no more real existence than 'the average man' or 'the man in the street' dear to European and American journalists; he is a compromise between the ideal personality set up for the Lepchas by themselves and the observable behaviour of the majority of the Lepchas in Lingthem. It is the Lepcha stereotype who has been described.

157 The Lepcha stereotype is unaggressive, sociable, hard-working, constantly good-humoured, greatly interested in direct consumption (eating, drinking and copulation), fundamentally optimistic. The relationship of the Lepcha stereotype with his fellows is based rationally on mutual benefits and obligations; very little stress is placed on personal affection and practically no interest is taken in, and no allowance made for, individual character or temperament. The Lepcha insists very firmly on the independence of the adult individual and the family group; no attempt is made to dominate or exploit others, and any attempt by others to dominate or exploit is resisted as actively as the rules of the culture permit. The Lepcha identifies himself strongly with his family group and with his
[619] immediate community—the village; the identification with the tribe as a whole is much less strong, and one of the Lepchas' chief social weaknesses is that, except in the case of serious crime, the Mandal and inhabitants of one village have little influence over the inhabitants of any other village under a different Mandal. The Lepcha stereotype calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility and almost unquestioning confidence from younger people in their elders.

128 Although this stereotype does not, I think, correspond exactly to the behaviour or attitudes of any one person, it is not for that

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

128 reason valueless. It represents the ideal towards which the Lepchas strive and to which they attempt to mould their children, and it is in the deviations from this imposed stereotype that the greater number of psychological difficulties for the Lepchas arise. As such it has preponderating weight in the formation of individual character, and constitutes a point of reference from which deviation can be measured.

157 Deviations fall into two groups, negative and positive; people may lack some characteristic or qualification called for by the cultural 159 stereotype; or they may manifest characteristics and types of behaviour which exaggerate cultural characteristics, or they may have temperamental qualities definitely opposed to the cultural stereotype. Judged by such rigorous standards there is probably nobody who is not slightly deviant. There are, however, two people in Lingthem, Chala Mandal and Tafoor, in whom I could discern no temperamental cause for psychological discomfort. Both had reasons for a certain distress, but they were external ones; the Mandal was unhappy because he had no son, Tafoor, I think, slightly disappointed because he had neither the wealth nor position of his late father the Muktair. These two people practically embodied the Lepcha ideal, the Mandal for the layman and Tafoor for the lama; Tafoor's household also approached more nearly than any other to the Lepcha ideal.

[158] Owing to the Lepchas' great tolerance of—or rather indifference, to—shades of character, the maladjusted tend to be sociotic[1] rather than neurotic deviants. The only temperament type to which the Lepchas manifest constant opposition is the aggressive and domineering personality; the person who wishes to domineer or to command is constantly thwarted; to paraphrase Saki's epigram, there may be people born to command among the Lepchas, but they never find anybody born to obey them. The most outstanding of these aggressive characters were Tempa, who was described in Chapter Five,[2] and Kurma, whose story is given at length in the next chapter. It is worth noting that these two are also sociotically maladjusted; Tempa is a foreigner from outside Zongu, reared in a mixed community, and living under the slightly humiliating condition of resident son-in-law (*komok myok*); Kurma was adopted by an elderly couple as a little boy, was very unhappy

[1] This term was first used by Dr. Moreno to distinguish socially maladjusted from temperamentally maladjusted people.

[2] See pp. 124–126.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lingthem were or had been adopted; and Kurma is unique in having completely abandoned his adopting parents to return to his biological parents. Again as a person with two elder brothers Kurma is unusual in having become head of the household at an early age and in having had the heavy economic burden of seven funerals in a fairly short stretch of time.[4] He is also unusual in having started with an irregular sexual union, and extremely unfortunate in the mortality of his wives. 124 [597]

Nevertheless, despite his unusual character and circumstances, I believe that Kurma's life-story, incomplete though it is, gives a good illustration of the dynamic workings of Lepcha culture and an adequate cross-section view of Lepcha society. By developing the themes which he touches on,[5] sometimes very cursorily, one would have an almost complete picture of Lepcha social arrangements; if it were not for the awkwardness of such an arrangement, all the preceding chapters of this book could be used as amplification for Kurma's story.

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[4] The only people in Lingthem similarly circumstanced were Nariya and Rigya, and they were economically far better able to stand the strain.

[5] I have omitted in the following pages all the impersonal material (ceremonies, etc.) which Kurma incorporated in his story.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered Lepchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in Sikkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were employed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropologists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere else as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has apparently been found between the Lepcha language and some dialect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the people of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of their own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans at some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. 'Lepcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though the philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the Russian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since all books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, it would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word would appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present Darjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before the beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[end map (A)]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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131

[end map (B)]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 [781] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 181 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [343] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 144 181 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

a mixed race calling themselves Kumpa Rong, or Kumpa Lepchas; but they are emigrants from Tibet, having come with the first rajah of Sikkim. These people are more turbulent and bolder than the Lepchas, and retain much of their Tibetan character, and even of that of the very province from which they came; which is north-east of Lhassa, and inhabited by robbers. All the accounts I have received of it agree with those given by MM. Huc and Gabet.

Next to the Lepchas, the most numerous tribe in Sikkim is that of the Limboos (called "Chung" by the Lepchas); they abound also in East Nepal, which they once ruled, inhabiting elevations from 2000 feet to 5000 feet. They are Boodhists, and though not divided into castes, belong to several tribes. All consider themselves as the earliest inhabitants of the Tambur Valley, though they have a tradition of having originally emigrated from Tibet, which their Tartar countenance confirms. They are more slender and sinewy than the Lepchas, and neither plait their hair nor wear ornaments; instead of the ban they use the Nepal curved knife, called "cookree," while for the striped kirtle of the Lepcha are substituted loose cotton trousers and a tight jacket; a sash is worn round the middle, and on the head a small cotton cap. When they ruled over East Nepal, their system was feudal; and on their uniting against the Nepalese, they were with difficulty dislodged from their strongholds. They are said to be equally brave and cruel in battle, putting the old and weak to the sword,

to here: they are all described in various papers by Mr. Hodgson, in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal." The Dhurma people are numerous at Dorjiling; they are often runaways, but invariably prove more industrious settlers than the Lepchas. In the Himalaya the name Bhotan is unknown amongst the Tibetans; it signifies literally (according to Mr. Hodgson) the end of Bhota, or Tibet, being the eastern extreme of that country. The Lepchas designate Bhotan as Ayeu, or Aieu, as do often the Bhotanese themselves. Sikkim, again, is called Lhop, or Lho', by the Lepchas and Bhotanese.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a [136 137] decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-bu* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854.
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Dorjiling: from its summit Chumulari (23,929 feet) is 133
seen to the north-east, at eighty-four miles distance, rearing its head as a great rounded mass over the snowy Chola range, out of which it appears to rise, although in reality lying forty miles beyond;—so deceptive is the perspective of snowy mountains. To the north-west again, at upwards of 100 miles distance, a beautiful group of snowy mountains rises above the black Singalelah range, the chief being, perhaps, as high as Kinchinjunga, from which it is fully eighty miles distant to the westward; and between them no mountain of considerable altitude intervenes; the Nepalese Himalaya in that direction sinking remarkably towards the Arun river, which there enters Nepal from Tibet.

The top of Sinchul is a favourite excursion from Dorjiling, being very easy of access, and the path abounding in rare and beautiful plants, and passing through magnificent forests of oak, magnolia, and rhododendron; while the summit, besides embracing this splendid view of the snowy range over the Dorjiling spur in the foreground, commands also the plains of India, with the courses of the Teesta, Mahanuddee, Balasun and Mechi rivers. In the months of 133
April and May, when the magnolias and rhododendrons are 137
in blossom, the gorgeous vegetation is, in some respects, not to be surpassed by anything in the tropics; but the effect is [132]
much marred by the prevailing gloom of the weather. The white-flowered magnolia (*M. excelsa*, Wall,) forms a predominant tree at 7000 to 8000 feet; and in 1848 it blossomed so profusely, that the forests on the broad flanks of Sinchul, and other mountains of that elevation, appeared as if sprinkled with snow. The purple-flowered kind again 137
(*M. Campbellii*) hardly occurs below 8000 feet, and forms an immense, but very ugly, black-barked, sparingly branched

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

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i

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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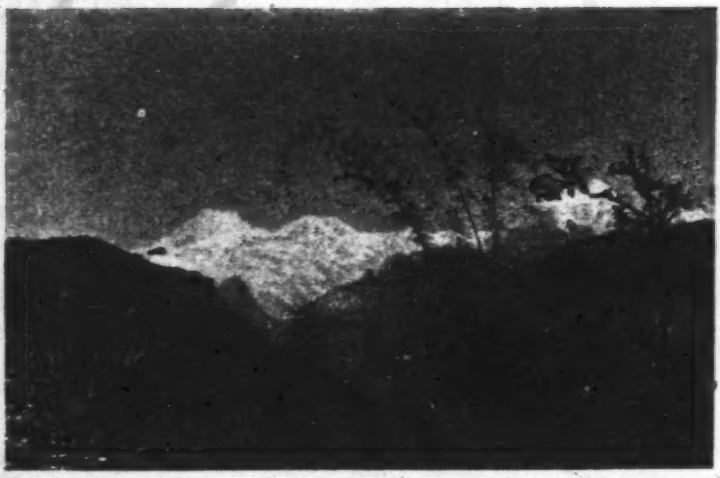

Above: TALUNG VALLEY LOOKING TOWARDS KINCHENJUNGA

Below: TALUNG VALLEY LOOKING EASTWARDS TOWARDS TIBET

[facing p. 76]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 be rubbed over the body. Some men also carry a little arrow poison in a bag fastened inside their clothes over the heart. The greater number of people however do not take any of these precautions.

For the Lepchas devils are rather similar to the witches in European folklore; they are malevolent but not necessarily particularly intelligent; and there are numerous stories of devils being fooled by fairly simple devices, just as the witch was fooled in the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. There is no belief at all in ghosts or *revenants*; should the simulacrum of a dead person be seen it would be a devil in disguise. But although many people told me of having heard or seen devils, I did not hear a single story of any one seeing the dead or absent.

vii

133 This then is the landscape in which the rest of the book is set. To the south the hills rise steeply to an invisible crest; to the north the ground descends precipitously to the hidden Talung river, and then rises opposite even more steeply; behind the fairly barren hills are the peaks of Siniolchi and its eastern neighbours, jagged black rock topped with gleaming snow. At the western end of the Talung valley rises the stupendous mass of Kinchenjunga and its neighbouring peaks, Gods and the home of Gods. To the east are the green hills of Sikkim, and beyond the ragged snow-mountains which mark the frontier of Tibet.

For the European the landscape is one of overwhelming beauty, spoilt only by the very considerable difficulty of travelling about, so rocky and precipitous is the land. The picture I should like to [137] convey is of a very steep and broken series of hillsides, except in small clefts nearly bare of big trees, but almost entirely covered with low growths of shrubs and saplings of various tints of green, flecked with patches of colour at some seasons; the yellow sweet-smelling daphne *edgeworthiana*, the blue hydrangea-like flower of *dichroa febrifuga*, the rich purple of the Sikkim rose. Here and there, scattered over the hillsides, are pieces of cleared and burned land, with the larger tree-trunks standing up lopped and charred; pieces of land placed in seemingly quite arbitrary positions, with large stretches of green between them. Down in the valley the ground appears slightly more cultivated; there are roughly terraced fields fenced with bamboo hurdles, and occasional small rectangles

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of a deeper yellow-green where the cardamum grows. Scattered here and there among the prevailing greens may be seen the glow of a fruit-tree in flower, and nearby the low thatched roof of a house, barely distinguishable until you are close upon it. The paths are the faintest tracks, invisible until you come upon them; there is no main road, nothing to guide your way; except that there are usually more stones—for the bigger stones will have been removed from the neighbouring fields and piled on the path to make drier walking in the wet weather—there is little to indicate what is path and what merely rough ground. Overtowering and dwarfing all the works of man are the enormous ramparts of the gleaming snows, cutting short a quarter of the horizon in almost every direction. You can see that the land is in part cultivated and inhabited, but the part seems insignificant; in the battle between man and nature, nature seems everywhere the winner. 133 [487]

That is the landscape for the European; for the Lepcha not a single feature is the same. Except when they refer to them as the habitations of the high Gods, the Lepchas do not remember the mountains; they do not lift up their eyes, they look down on the ground. Every piece of land is meaningful for them, for every piece, unless it be the home of a supernatural, is, has been, or will be cultivated. They think and speak of their country as a poor country, demanding disproportionate labour for the food they require for themselves and their families. For them the land is not a friend; it is a material; and when they look at it they see therein the work and sweat they have fed it with all their lives. Every piece of land, every step they take, reminds them of the past and the present, of their own work and struggles, and those of their neighbours; the houses and fences they have helped to build, the land they have helped to clear and weed and harvest, the places where they have played as children, or, later, met for amorous encounter. They see too the cliffs and rocks and lonely trees where dwell the devils who menace and destroy their otherwise peaceful and happy existence; these visible signs remind them of those evil forces—disease and death, blight and famine, childlessness and enmity and quarrelling—that mar a life which, though hard enough, would otherwise be easy and friendly, full of health and happiness. The Lepchas do not see the landscape; they see the records of their lives, and of the lives of their ancestors, and of the lives to come of their children. 823

[p. 82 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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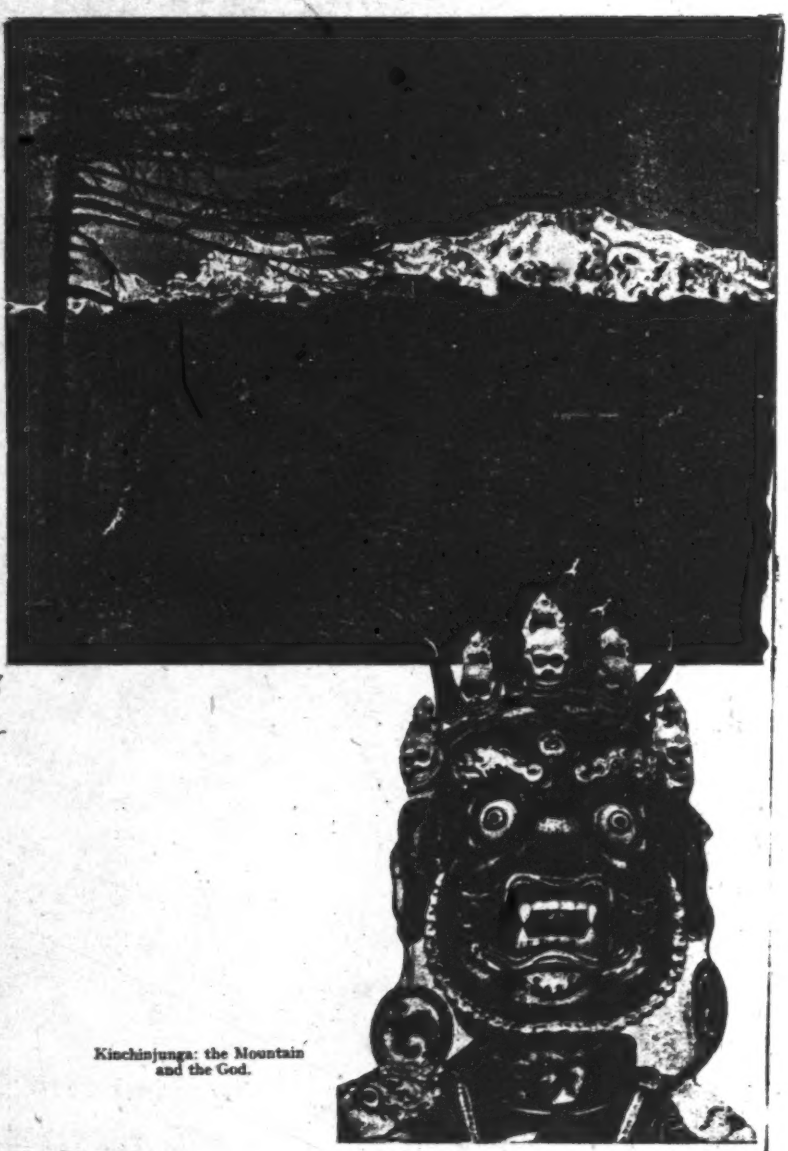

778
532

Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[48] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285] ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415 bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people knew only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133

Looking east from the monastery. The central peak is Paubunri, and the ridge of which it forms a part is the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim.

[facing p. 5]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

as good as another. Although the two places are so near in 181
terms of modern travel, in everything else Talung is thousands of years behind, looked at, that is, from what our unhappy machine-age (but actually slave-driven) civilisation is pleased to regard as progress. Talung has neither drains nor electric light; nor, more fortunately, any newspapers; but its inhabitants are happy and, all things considered, contented. A few, a very few, of the people had heard vague and distorted rumours of the Great War (that which did not end war): none, however, so far as I know, had heard of India's new constitution, nor even of King George the Sixth, and the day of the Coronation passed unnoticed, except in so far as it was a fine day and so permitted a full day's work in the fields.

My first view of the Talung was in the spring of 1936, on 114
the way to Everest. We did not enter the valley since our 133
road lay straight through Sikkim to the plains of Tibet, and there was no time for excursions off the route. But from Singhik bungalow one looks right up the valley to Kinchinjunga at its head, one of the most spectacular sights in the whole Himalaya. But on this occasion we did not see the mountain, which was hidden in cloud, and the valley itself looked grim and uninviting, with patches of winter snow still lying in the shadier parts of the higher slopes. When we returned in July the valley was deep in mist and filled with small clouds which looked like floating wads of cotton-wool; but even at this distance many shining patches of emerald cultivation were clearly visible on the steep hillsides, although we could see no villages.

During the previous autumn I had been staying in Nepal, 114
hoping, amongst other things, to get permission to round off my ethnological studies of the people (which I had been pursuing intermittently for years) by a stay of some months in an actual Gurkha village. My proposals proved unacceptable to the Maharaja, who found it impossible to make any exception to the rule, laid down by his predecessors and never once relaxed, by which no European is permitted to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346
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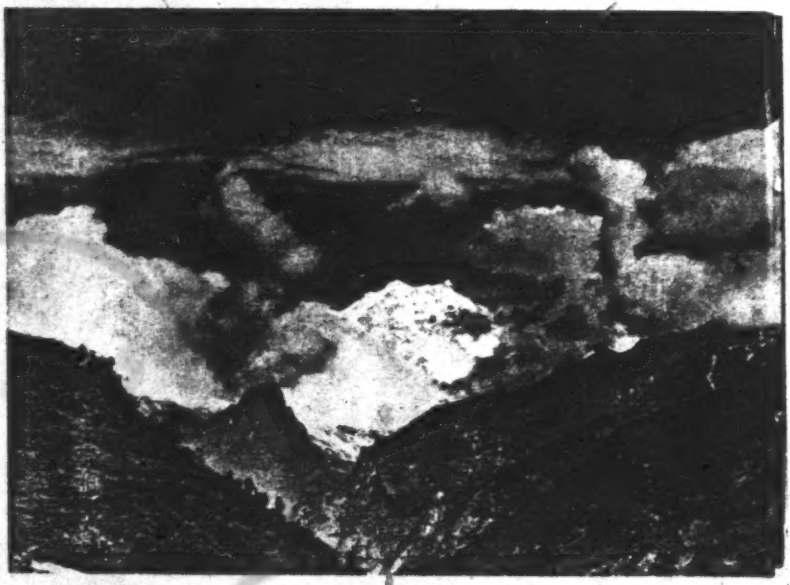
Lingtem Monastery.



Storm clouds over Kinchinjunga.

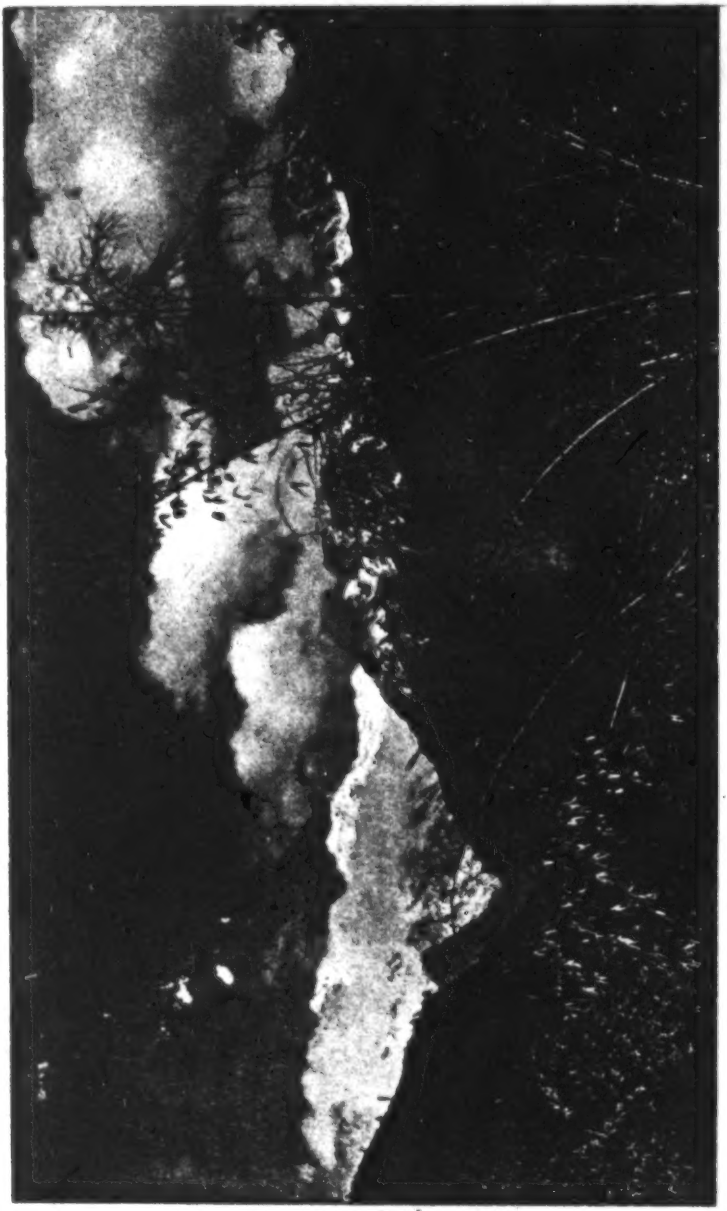
[facing p. 17]

183 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron [491] suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with 768 votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter 823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

● 133



Looking west from the monastery, with my favourite tree in the foreground, and Kinchinjunga in the background.

[facing p. 23]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, 137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

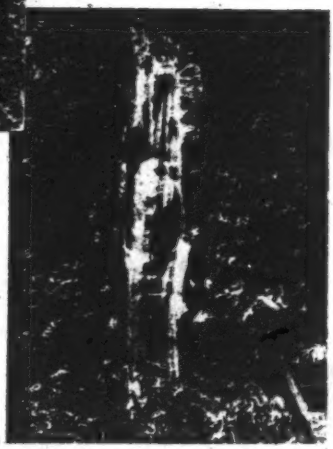
2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

136

Tree fern.

133

Hillside in Sikkim.



Waterfall in the Talung.

[Facing p. 31]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342
351
133

Typical Lepcha homestead.

241
291

Sowing dry rice.

342
356
417
291

Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133
361
131

[end map (A)]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133
361
131

[end map (B)]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER V.

View from Mr. Hodgson's of range of snowy mountains—Their extent and elevation—Delusive appearance of elevation—Sinchul, view from and vegetation of—Chumulari—Magnolias, white and purple—Rhododendron Dalhousiæ, arboreum and argenteum—Natives of Dorjiling—Lepchas, origin, tradition of flood, morals, dress, arms, ornaments, diet—cups, origin and value—Marriages—Diseases—Burial—Worship and religion—Bijoosa—Kampa Rong, or Arratt—Limboos, origin, habits, language, &c.—Moormis—Magras—Mechis—Comparison of customs with those of the natives of Assam, Khasia, &c.

133
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THE summer, or rainy season of 1848, was passed at or near Dorjiling, during which period I chiefly occupied myself in forming collections, and in taking meteorological observations. I resided at Mr Hodgson's for the greater part of the time, in consequence of his having given me a hospitable invitation to consider his house my home. The view from his windows is one quite unparalleled for the scenery it embraces, commanding confessedly the grandest known landscape of snowy mountains in the Himalaya, and hence in the world.* Kinchinjunga (forty-five miles distant) is the prominent object, rising 21,000 feet above the level of the observer out of a sea of intervening wooded hills; whilst, on a line with its snows, the eye descends below the horizon, to a narrow gulf 7000 feet deep in the mountains, where the Great Rungeet, white with foam, threads a tropical forest with a silver line.

[p. 122]

* For an account of the geography of these regions, and the relation of the Sikkim Himalaya to Tibet, &c., see Appendix.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

To the north-west towards Nepal, the snowy peaks of 133 Kubra and Junnoo (respectively 24,005 feet and 25,312 feet) rise over the shoulder of Singalelah; whilst eastward the snowy mountains appear to form an unbroken range, trending north-east to the great mass of Donkia (23,176 feet) and thence south-east by the fingered peaks of Tunkola and the silver cone of Chola, (17,320 feet) gradually sinking into the Bhotan mountains at Gipmoochi (14,509 feet).

The most eloquent descriptions I have read fail to convey to my mind's eye the forms and colours of snowy mountains, or to my imagination the sensations and impressions that rivet my attention to these sublime phenomena when they are present in reality; and I shall not therefore obtrude any attempt of the kind upon my reader. The latter has probably seen the Swiss Alps, which, though barely possessing half the sublimity, extent, or height of the Himalaya, are yet far more beautiful. In either case he is struck with the precision and sharpness of their outlines, and still more with the wonderful play of colours on their snowy flanks, from the glowing hues reflected in orange, gold and ruby, from clouds illumined by the sinking or rising sun, to the ghastly pallor that succeeds with twilight, when the red seems to give place to its complementary colour green. Such dissolving-views elude all attempts at description, they are far too aërial to be chained to the memory, and fade from it so fast as to be gazed upon day after day, with undiminished admiration and pleasure, long after the mountains themselves have lost their sublimity and apparent height.

The actual extent of the snowy range seen from Mr. Hodgson's windows is comprised within an arc of 80° (from north 30° west to north 50° east), or nearly a quarter

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

●133 of the horizon, along which the perpetual snow forms an unbroken girdle or crest of frosted silver; and in winter, when the mountains are covered down to 8000 feet, this white ridge stretches uninterruptedly for more than 160°. No known view is to be compared with this in extent, when the proximity and height of the mountains are considered; for within the 80° above mentioned more than twelve peaks rise above 20,000 feet, and there are none below 15,000 feet, while Kinchin is 28,178, and seven others above 22,000. The nearest perpetual snow is on Nursing, a beautifully sharp conical peak 19,139 feet high, and thirty-two miles distant; the most remote mountain seen is Donkia, 23,176 feet high, and seventy-three miles distant; whilst Kinchin, which forms the principal mass both for height and bulk, is exactly forty-five miles distant.

On first viewing this glorious panorama, the impression produced on the imagination by their prodigious elevation is, that the peaks tower in the air and pierce the clouds, and such are the terms generally used in descriptions of similar alpine scenery; but the observer, if he look again, will find that even the most stupendous occupy a very low position on the horizon, the top of Kinchin itself measuring only 4° 31′ above the level of the observer! Donkia again, which is 23,176 feet above the sea, or about 15,700 above Mr. Hodgson's, rises only 1° 55′ above the horizon; an angle which is quite inappreciable to the eye, when unaided by instruments.*

This view may be extended a little by ascending Sinchul, which rises a thousand feet above the elevation of Mr. Hodgson's house, and is a few miles south-east of

* These are the apparent angles which I took from Mr. Hodgson's house (alt. 7300 feet) with an excellent theodolite, no deduction being made for refraction.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Dorjiling: from its summit Chumulari (23,929 feet) is 133
seen to the north-east, at eighty-four miles distance, rearing its head as a great rounded mass over the snowy Chola range, out of which it appears to rise, although in reality lying forty miles beyond;—so deceptive is the perspective of snowy mountains. To the north-west again, at upwards of 100 miles distance, a beautiful group of snowy mountains rises above the black Singalelah range, the chief being, perhaps, as high as Kinchinjunga, from which it is fully eighty miles distant to the westward; and between them no mountain of considerable altitude intervenes; the Nepalese Himalaya in that direction sinking remarkably towards the Arun river, which there enters Nepal from Tibet.

The top of Sinchul is a favourite excursion from Dorjiling, being very easy of access, and the path abounding in rare and beautiful plants, and passing through magnificent forests of oak, magnolia, and rhododendron; while the summit, besides embracing this splendid view of the snowy range over the Dorjiling spur in the foreground, commands also the plains of India, with the courses of the Teesta, Mahanuddee, Balasun and Mechi rivers. In the months of 133
April and May, when the magnolias and rhododendrons are 137
in blossom, the gorgeous vegetation is, in some respects, not to be surpassed by anything in the tropics; but the effect is [132]
much marred by the prevailing gloom of the weather. The white-flowered magnolia (*M. excelsa*, Wall,) forms a predominant tree at 7000 to 8000 feet; and in 1848 it blossomed so profusely, that the forests on the broad flanks of Sinchul, and other mountains of that elevation, appeared as if sprinkled with snow. The purple-flowered kind again 137
(*M. Campbellii*) hardly occurs below 8000 feet, and forms an immense, but very ugly, black-barked, sparingly branched

XII

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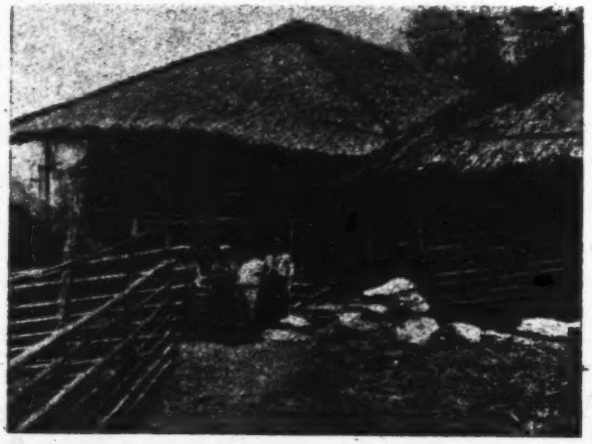

31. Lepcha house with stores

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32. Fenced Lepcha settlement

[End Plate 12]

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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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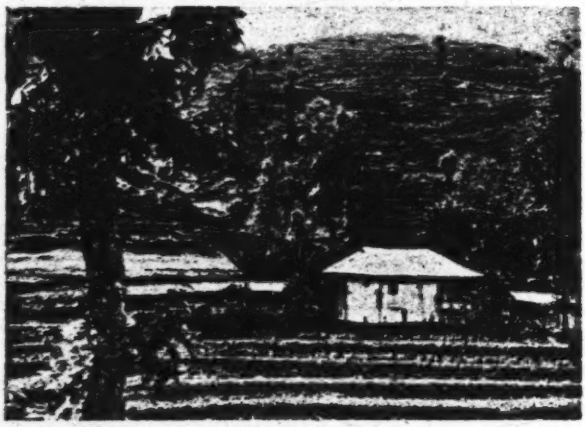

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent [136 137] up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

● 136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, 137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

136

Tree fern.

133

Hillside in Sikkim.

Waterfall in the Talung.

[facing p. 31]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little
136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the
346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the
[77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to
712 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

● 136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

that owing to the heavy rain of the last few days a great deal of the path has disappeared, as a result of which it will take us another two days to reach the monastery. Also, there has been heavy snow on the pass above, so that it is not yet possible to get from Talung over to Lachen. In view of the weather, which shows no signs of abating, everyone thinks the best course is for us to get out of this valley as quickly as possible, and we accordingly left at six-thirty, deciding to make a day of it and go straight through to Mangen, which we eventually reached at six in the evening. It looked at first as though the weather would clear, but by nine it was only too obvious that my mind was definitely not in accord with Tafoor's: it never ceased raining throughout the day. We decided to keep to the far side of the river, as the path was said to be slightly better. It turned out to be little used, as a result of which we appeared at times to be struggling through virgin jungle. It was impossible to keep the leeches away, and after the first hour or so I gave up trying. Whenever we came to an open patch the coolie who was with me took out his knife and scraped them off my legs: they were so thick that they looked like bunches of worms. It was really a waste of time, for five minutes later they were just as thick as before.

By midday we were opposite Lingtem again, where there was another bridge to cross. I had been dreading this all the morning, but actually I found it comparatively easy; having done it once gave one confidence.

We struggled into Mangen just as the mail was arriving. Nothing much to read, except my pass-book, which, as usual, shows me to possess even less than I imagined. I was wet through to the skin and had no change of clothes, so spent the evening dressed in a magnificent fur-lined sort of mandarin's robe of crimson silk, which Palden managed to borrow from a local Kazi. The coolies arrived at ten p.m.

4th June:

I was unable to move yesterday owing to my legs having

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the *pto* was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear ; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it ; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said, 'You have eaten part of my body ; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing, gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game, and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [538]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull was asleep ; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds. The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards ;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niu-big in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tschangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear. 136 [231 825]

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu. 136 171

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[67] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[68]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

67. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 132 sq.
68. E. C. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. R. Livesey, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 199 sq., W. S. Thom, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 106 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 222, seq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 134 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

136 [71] Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 232] The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 262 825 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against [782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

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132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 be rubbed over the body. Some men also carry a little arrow poison in a bag fastened inside their clothes over the heart. The greater number of people however do not take any of these precautions.

For the Lepchas devils are rather similar to the witches in European folklore; they are malevolent but not necessarily particularly intelligent; and there are numerous stories of devils being fooled by fairly simple devices, just as the witch was fooled in the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. There is no belief at all in ghosts or *revenants*; should the simulacrum of a dead person be seen it would be a devil in disguise. But although many people told me of having heard or seen devils, I did not hear a single story of any one seeing the dead or absent.

vii

133 This then is the landscape in which the rest of the book is set. To the south the hills rise steeply to an invisible crest; to the north the ground descends precipitously to the hidden Talung river, and then rises opposite even more steeply; behind the fairly barren hills are the peaks of Siniolchi and its eastern neighbours, jagged black rock topped with gleaming snow. At the western end of the Talung valley rises the stupendous mass of Kinchenjunga and its neighbouring peaks, Gods and the home of Gods. To the east are the green hills of Sikkim, and beyond the ragged snow-mountains which mark the frontier of Tibet.

For the European the landscape is one of overwhelming beauty, spoilt only by the very considerable difficulty of travelling about, so rocky and precipitous is the land. The picture I should like to [137] convey is of a very steep and broken series of hillsides, except in small clefts nearly bare of big trees, but almost entirely covered with low growths of shrubs and saplings of various tints of green, flecked with patches of colour at some seasons; the yellow sweet-smelling daphne *edgeworthiana*, the blue hydrangea-like flower of *dichroa febrifuga*, the rich purple of the Sikkim rose. Here and there, scattered over the hillsides, are pieces of cleared and burned land, with the larger tree-trunks standing up lopped and charred; pieces of land placed in seemingly quite arbitrary positions, with large stretches of green between them. Down in the valley the ground appears slightly more cultivated; there are roughly terraced fields fenced with bamboo hurdles, and occasional small rectangles

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought
[823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a
351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch,
[322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered,
137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with [287] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either [361] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and [[61]] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the 527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Dorjiling: from its summit Chumulari (23,929 feet) is 133
seen to the north-east, at eighty-four miles distance, rearing its head as a great rounded mass over the snowy Chola range, out of which it appears to rise, although in reality lying forty miles beyond;—so deceptive is the perspective of snowy mountains. To the north-west again, at upwards of 100 miles distance, a beautiful group of snowy mountains rises above the black Singalelah range, the chief being, perhaps, as high as Kinchinjunga, from which it is fully eighty miles distant to the westward; and between them no mountain of considerable altitude intervenes; the Nepalese Himalaya in that direction sinking remarkably towards the Arun river, which there enters Nepal from Tibet.

The top of Sinchul is a favourite excursion from Dorjiling, being very easy of access, and the path abounding in rare and beautiful plants, and passing through magnificent forests of oak, magnolia, and rhododendron; while the summit, besides embracing this splendid view of the snowy range over the Dorjiling spur in the foreground, commands also the plains of India, with the courses of the Teesta, Mahanuddee, Balasun and Mechi rivers. In the months of 133
April and May, when the magnolias and rhododendrons are 137●
in blossom, the gorgeous vegetation is, in some respects, not to be surpassed by anything in the tropics; but the effect is [132]
much marred by the prevailing gloom of the weather. The white-flowered magnolia (*M. excelsa*, Wall,) forms a predominant tree at 7000 to 8000 feet; and in 1848 it blossomed so profusely, that the forests on the broad flanks of Sinchul, and other mountains of that elevation, appeared as if sprinkled with snow. The purple-flowered kind again 137
(*M. Campbellii*) hardly occurs below 8000 feet, and forms an immense, but very ugly, black-barked, sparingly branched

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

137 tree, leafless in winter and also during the flowering season, when it puts forth from the ends of its branches great rose-purple cup-shaped flowers, whose fleshy petals strew the ground. On its branches, and on those of oaks and laurels, *Rhododendron Dalhousiæ* grows epiphytically, a slender shrub, bearing from three to six white lemon-scented bells, four and a half inches long and as many broad, at the end of each branch. In the same woods the scarlet rhododendron (*R. arboreum*) is very scarce, and is outvied by the great *R. argenteum*, which grows as a tree forty feet high, with magnificent leaves twelve to fifteen inches long, deep green, wrinkled above and silvery below, while the flowers are as large as those of *R. Dalhousiæ*, and grow more in a cluster. I know nothing of the kind that exceeds in beauty the flowering branch of *R. argenteum*, with its wide spreading foliage and glorious mass of flowers.

Oaks, laurels, maples, birch, chesnut, hydrangea, a species of fig (which is found on the very summit), and three Chinese and Japanese genera, are the principal features of the forest; the common bushes being *Aucuba*, *Skimmia*, and the curious *Helwingia*, which bears little clusters of flowers on the centre of the leaf, like butcher's-broom. In spring immense broad-leaved arums spring up, with green or purple-striped hoods, that end in tail-like threads, eighteen inches long, which lie along the ground; and there are various kinds of *Convallaria*, *Paris*, *Begonia*, and other beautiful flowering herbs. Nearly thirty ferns may be gathered on this excursion, including many of great beauty and rarity, but the tree-fern does not ascend so high. Grasses are very rare in these woods, excepting the dwarf bamboo, now cultivated in the open air in England.

000 Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [B7]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden caps.-Analyst]

539 *Fŏa-rŏa-lĭń kar-gok go-ma som-na-yań*
Ăr-tan-tsum bŭ dok ă-tim-bu lăt non-ni
Chań-sa-li ka-sok go ma-f'ăn na-yań
Mar-ňo bŭu uń ňot ă-tim-bu lăt non-ni.

Though I ate not the *fŏa-rŏa-lĭń* wild plantain. [1])
I feel great pain in my *ar-tan-tsum* liver.
Though I took not the wild *chan-sa-li* yam [2])
I am burned up with a fiery thirst.

V.

Eh Ye!
Săk-la ma-run-ne loń la ma-run-ne
Mĭt tan-gum nom-f'om dŭ-par-ňo soń-ňa
Kyoń-ra-lo lat ă-re re favi-lă go
Ar-tan-tsum byat la-kań kyĭń la go ma.

Eh Ye!
I feel very sad.
Listen O maidens behind! (respected) as *dŭ-par* great-(mothers
I feel this *kyoń-ra-lo* heart (of mine)
Is pierced through and my *ar-tan-tsum* breath [3]) is chill.

Eh Ye!
Go-roń ňo! Săk la ma-run-ne
S'er f'so-di nuk-bo ram ho nun e
Om kiń-tsum s'u noń-ňan go dun be che
Sak-la ma-run-ne loń la ma-run-ne

Eh Ye!
I feel very sad.
O Head-Father spirit, creator of *S'er* fate.
Tell me what is my *Om* destiny!
I feel very sad!

Eh Ye!
S'i-mĭn-mi kap gi-par-ŏoń ňin kap sa-lo noń
Ki-dak tsam-ga-non san-roń
S'u mat noń ňań go yoń s'ŭ dĭń ma é
Săk la ma-run-ne loń la ma-run ne.

Eh Ye!
I (am only) a *S'i-ruan-mi* boy,
A *gi-par-ŏoń* youngster. I implore you humbly standing
Why have you given me this *sa-lo-non* and *tsam-la-non* (sorrow
I feel very sad.

VI.

Fok-tsom-mon na yon
Kiń tsom ŏoń na s'em
Mi-f'ik-mo s'u yĭń
Kiń tsom ŏoń na len
Duk-mar-bŭu som f'at
Tuk-ta-li Nă-soń ňa.
Zăm-sa-li Fa-duń f'iń
A-yu ru-ma é
Kyoń-ra-lo lat dok
Ar-s'i ban s'u yĭ
Z'em ta-f'i s'u yĭ
Gi-par-vim s'u da.

O you with the flowing hair!
O fair one with the neat parted hair!
Why have you *mi-f'ik mo* charmed me so?
You fair one with the neat parted hair!
O old great grandmother *Tuk-ta-li Nă-soń*
You *duk-mar-bŭu* joiner of our breath
O old great grandfather *Zam-sa-li* lord *Fa-duń*
Praise be to your namee!
(But) why have you *ar-s'i-ban* created me?
Why have you *z'em-to-mi* created me?
Why have you *gi-par-vim* created me?
To suffer such heart-breaking sorrow?

The following seems a figurative declaration of affection by a youth of the valley the Singbali-river towards a girl of the Kirungpata-glen.

---

[1]) *Kar-gok* is the wild plantain (*Musa* sp.). It is full of large sharply jagged and irritant seeds. The cultivated plantain *Kar-duń* is seedless.

[222] [137] [2]) *Ka-sok* is a hairy round wild yam of large size, which grows near the surface of the ground, but its tubers cause intense thirst. Other wild yams found in Sikhim are *Sa-um-buk*, *Sań-gol-buk* and *Sa-li-buk* (?) probably the *Chań-sa-li* of text.

[3]) Literally „Lungs".

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291
302

19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

142
411
137
224

22. Lepcha hunter

Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

[End Plate 8]

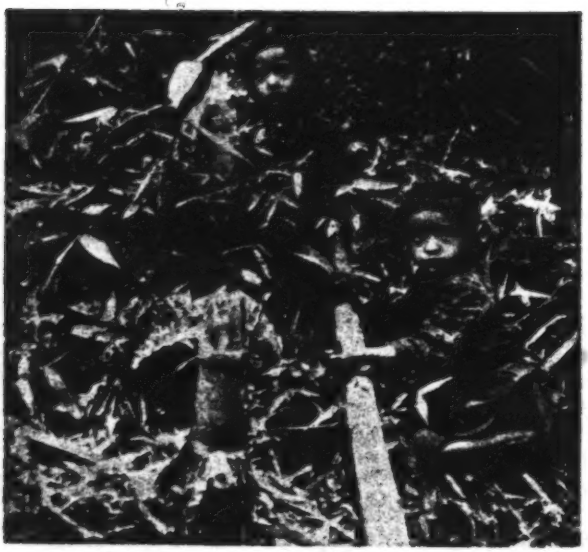
[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
482
415
412
137
313

37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

142
291
302
137



38. Lepcha children

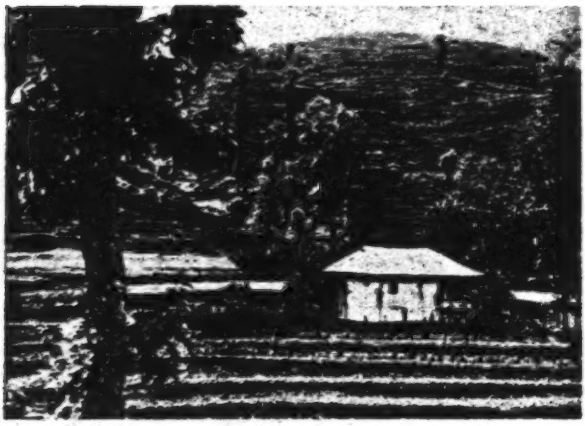
[End Plate 15]

XVI

294
412
313

39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

241
133
343
137



40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour
[141] would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and
302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also
291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men
142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

9: Risley G-5 (1886-1888) 1891
AK5 Lepcha AK5

LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE I.

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Indices.									Facial angle.
				Nasal.	Naso-malar.	Cephalic.	Fronto-zygo-matic.	Vertico-cephalic.	Vertico-bimalar.	Vertico-frontal.	Vertico-bizygo-matic.	Height and weight.	
1	Tunda ...	Darjiling	28	73·4	107·1	79·5	80·5	74·0	56·0	54·0	67·0	.....	66
2	Passan ...	Ditto ...	27	66·0	109·7	86·3	76·4	77·8	55·6	51·2	66·9	.....	61
3	Harchu ...	Ditto ...	26	72·0	111·1	80·5	76·0	69·3	54·4	48·8	64·1	.....	63
4	Gachu ...	Ditto ...	27	76·0	104·8	81·9	80·4	69·7	54·3	50·4	62·7	.....	56
5	Sungkul ...	Sikkim ...	43	69·8	108·7	82·4	74·4	71·7	54·5	48·8	65·5	.....	69
6	Gairlunda ...	Do. ...	25	74·5	105·4	75·8	75·4	61·8	49·3	44·3	58·7	.....	63
7	Singbir ...	Do. ...	39	74·5	111·5	79·3	80·7	70·0	52·3	50·9	62·9	.....	69
8	Nahasuk ...	Darjiling	26	68·0	107·8	73·1	79·2	59·9	50·6	47·1	59·4	.....	60
9	Adda ...	Sikkim ...	25	58·9	111·1	82·3	78·8	70·2	55·1	50·9	64·6	.....	64
10	Lama ...	Do. ...	25	72·5	108·4	80·6	80·4	65·7	51·7	46·9	58·3	.....	67
11	Achu ...	Darjiling	28	72·5	107·2	83·6	72·0	67·8	50·4	44·9	62·3	.....	71
12	Nanja ...	Ditto ...	25	68·5	108·6	80·7	76·2	68·5	51·3	48·2	63·2	.....	68

13	Jhara ...	Sikkim ...	28	72·5	107·1	86·8	81·8	72·0	53·0	51·1	62·5	.....	68
14	Panchu ...	Do. ...	26	69·2	110·2	87·9	78·2	68·7	56·6	51·3	65·6	.....	65
15	Lamba Sinh ...	Darjiling	30	70·9	107·6	79·1	74·4	61·2	49·7	44·6	60·0	.....	60
16	Angi ...	Ditto ...	27	71·6	107·6	79·3	74·6	68·8	55·1	[illegible]	65·0	.....	70
17	Dyah ...	Ditto ...	25	82·9	109·2	83·3	75·0	72·5	50·2	48·8	65·1	.....	73
18	Nam Sinh ...	Ditto ...	25	76·0	102·9	80·1	74·4	70·7	49·2	49·7	66·8	.....	64
19	Gumba ...	Ditto ...	28	67·2	109·6	81·6	72·5	70·6	50·0	49·5	68·2	.....	66
20	Chara ...	Ditto ...	26	62·5	104·8	78·6	75·5	63·9	47·0	46·5	61·6	.....	66
21	Dhusing ...	Ditto ...	26	72·5	104·7	85·3	78·2	70·3	48·6	50·0	63·8	.....	72
22	Eafa ...	Ditto ...	25	62·2	108·0	81·3	80·7	71·4	48·3	52·6	65·2	.....	69
23	Atebi ...	Ditto ...	28	69·0	105·7	78·9	73·3	61·3	43·6	42·8	58·4	.....	62
24	Choba ...	Ditto ...	37	74·5	104·6	79·6	72·7	67·4	47·1	45·8	62·9	.....	68
25	Shonga Dinzi ...	Ditto ...	26	70·0	106·0	85·6	74·8	72·5	48·0	48·5	64·9	.....	64
26	Pashang ...	Ditto ...	45	72·5	109·2	79·4	73·6	69·4	46·8	47·5	64·5	.....	63
27	Assang ...	Ditto ...	25	66·6	105·0	79·8	79·3	70·0	47·1	49·5	62·3	.....	66
28	Khambu ...	Ditto ...	42	74·0	110·0	84·0	76·2	72·8	47·6	49·0	64·2	.....	68
29	Ponra ...	Ditto ...	28	65·3	108·0	74·1	74·3	68·6	49·7	49·7	66·6	.....	63
30	Dokan Sinh ...	Ditto ...	29	70·9	107·8	79·8	75·1	67·7	47·0	47·4	63·1	.....	62

1471

LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE I—*concluded.*

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Indices.									Facial angle.
				Nasal.	Naso-malar	Cephalic.	Fronto-zygo-matic.	Vertico-cephalic	Vertico-bimalar.	Vertico-frontal.	Vertico-bizygo-matic.	Height and weight.	
31	Bachu ...	Darjiling	30	74·0	104·9	77·4	71·1	69·1	49·5	47·0	66·1	.....	70
32	Koman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	26	70·0	106·7	79·4	72·3	68·0	47·6	47·2	65·2	.....	65
33	Sepraka ...	Ditto ...	28	67·9	108·4	77·7	72·5	66·2	48·1	46·3	63·9	.....	62
34	Ramba ...	Ditto ...	37	70·8	108·7	78·0	76·9	72·6	51·2	49·7	64·6	.....	68
35	Sungar ...	Ditto ...	26	61·4	109·8	78·0	73·9	64·5	44·1	45·4	61·4	.....	65
36	Ribu ...	Ditto ...	27	67·9	110·4	83·4	74·2	66·8	46·4	44·6	60·1	.....	69
37	Adung ...	Ditto ...	30	66·0	109·2	84·5	75·7	72·1	45·7	47·1	62·2	.....	65
38	Tunda ...	Ditto ...	45	68·5	112·7	77·8	75·9	65·1	49·7	47·0	61·9	.....	73
39	Taza ...	Ditto ...	26	69·0	109·2	84·5	73·5	66·9	48·8	46·6	63·3	.....	62
40	Hansi ...	Ditto ...	40	67·9	110·0	77·5	75·3	66·5	45·8	46·3	61·4	.....	68
41	Bahadur ...	Ditto ...	27	68·6	109·0	81·2	70·7	66·5	44·7	44·7	63·3	.....	60
42	Talman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	45	80·0	105·8	90·2	75·0	74·0	48·1	49·5	66.0	.....	61

9: Risley G-5 (1886-1888) 1891
AK5 Lepcha AK5
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43	Kaem Sinh ...	Ditto ...	35	80·0	108·5	76·6	73·0	66·9	47·5	46·6	63·3	.....		69
44	Tusing ...	Ditto ...	37	80·8	106·1	83·3	72·8	67·8	47·0	46·1	63·3	.....		65
45	Abeian ...	Ditto ...	45	63·6	107·6	81·4	70·0	68·9	48·1	45·3	64·3	.....		69
46	Powa ...	Ditto ...	28	62·9	107·6	79·7	73·7	64·3	44·6	44·6	60·5	.....		64
47	Jitmun ...	Ditto ...	37	72·7	104·8	83·8	70·1	70·3	44·9	44·1	62·8	.....		70
48	Arsinh ...	Ditto ...	27	64·8	108·1	80·8	75·9	66·3	43·9	46·6	61·4	.....		67
49	Dowainh ...	Ditto ...	33	68·6	111·7	80·7	70·6	69·3	48·1	47·6	67·4	.....		64
50	Kolhari ...	Ditto ...	36	68·6	109·0	79·6	75·0	67·4	46·0	46·0	61·3	.....		67
51	Keroki Sinh ...	Ditto ...	28	75·4	112·3	82·5	74·8	72·5	50·4	51·4	69·2	.....		71
52	Shaimtu ...	Ditto ...	25	69·8	104·7	82·5	74·2	66·2	47·2	46·8	63·0	.....		68
53	Shohar ...	Ditto ...	45	60·0	110·8	75·3	72·6	67·7	46·5	46·5	64·0	.....		65
54	Silmu ...	Ditto ...	40	67·7	103·7	80·5	76·4	69·8	48·4	47·4	62·1	.....		59
55	Pasinh ...	Sikkim ...	40	75·0	.....	80·4	74·2	64·8	.....	44·1	59·4	354·3		66
56	Lempu ...	Darjiling ...	...	80·9	.....	85·3	74·6	69·7	.....	46·5	62·3	331·4		...
57	Maktang ...	Nepal ...	...	80·0	.....	80·2	82·6	68·1	.....	51·8	62·7	362·9		67
	Average ...	.....	...	67·2	108·1	79·9	75·2	67·6	49·0	47·6	63·3	350·5		64·1

9: Risley G-5 (1886-1888) 1891
AK5 Lepcha AK5

LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE II.

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Measurements.													Remarks.
				Nasal height.	Nasal width.	Bimalar breadth.	Zygomalar breadth.	Cephalic length.	Cephalic breadth.	Minimum frontal breadth.	Maximum bizygomatic breadth.	Height, vertex to inter-superciliary point.	Height, vertex to tragus.	Height, vertex to chin.	Stature in C. M.	Weight in grammes.	
1	Tunda ...	Darjiling	28	49	36	112	120	186	148	108	134	62	121	200	149·0	.....	
2	Passan ...	Ditto ...	27	53	35	113	124	183	158	104	136	63	130	203	157·4	.....	
3	Harchu ...	Ditto ...	26	50	36	117	130	185	149	105	138	78	148	215	158·0	.....	
4	Gachu ...	Ditto ...	27	50	38	124	130	194	159	115	143	80	128	228	163·2	.....	
5	Sungkul ...	Sikkim ...	43	53	37	114	124	182	150	102	137	80	141	209	162·8	.....	
6	Gairlunda ...	Do. ...	35	51	38	110	116	182	138	99	131	77	135	223	154·6	.....	
7	Singbir ...	Do. ...	39	51	38	113	126	189	150	109	135	70	132	214	159·2	.....	
8	Nahasuk ...	Darjiling	26	50	34	115	124	186	136	107	135	92	132	227	161·8	.....	
9	Adda ...	Sikkim ...	25	56	33	117	130	181	149	108	137	73	132	212	163·0	.....	
10	Lama ...	Do. ...	35	51	37	118	128	186	150	107	133	96	140	228	163·2	.....	
11	Achu ...	Darjiling	28	51	37	110	118	177	146	98	136	75	122	218	155·0	.....	

12	Nanja ...	Ditto ...	25	54	37	116	126	192	155	109	143	77	130	226	160·6	.....
13	Jharu ...	Sikkim ...	28	51	37	112	130	175	152	108	132	68	134	211	159·6	.....
14	Panchu ...	Do ...	26	52	36	127	140	175	154	115	147	79	133	224	166·0	.....
15	Lamba Sing ...	Darjiling	30	55	39	117	126	182	144	105	141	85	132	235	168·4	.....
16	Angi ...	Ditto ...	27	53	38	117	126	184	146	103	138	68	131	212	160·0	.....
17	Dyah ...	Ditto ...	25	47	39	108	118	186	156	105	140	80	136	215	160·2	.....
18	Nam Sing ...	Ditto ...	25	50	38	101	104	181	145	102	137	70	132	205	150·0	.....
19	Gumba ...	Ditto ...	28	53	36	104	114	180	147	103	142	71	132	208	149·4	.....
20	Choora ...	Ditto ...	26	56	35	103	108	178	140	102	135	81	124	219	164·6	.....
21	Dhoozing ...	Ditto ...	26	51	37	105	110	178	152	108	138	75	136	216	161·4	.....
22	Eafa ...	Ditto ...	25	53	33	100	108	182	148	109	135	69	131	207	155·0	.....
23	Atebey ...	Ditto ...	28	55	38	104	110	185	146	102	139	79	137	238	169·0	.....
24	Choba ...	Ditto ...	37	55	41	107	112	192	153	104	143	76	137	227	160·0	.....
25	Shonga Dinzi ...	Ditto ...	26	50	35	100	106	176	151	101	135	73	130	208	157·6	.....
26	Pashong ...	Ditto ...	45	51	37	97	106	180	143	98	133	72	134	206	155·0	.....
27	Assang ...	Ditto ...	25	51	34	99	104	184	147	104	131	70	130	210	152·0	.....
28	Khambu ...	Ditto ...	42	54	40	100	110	182	153	103	135	73	133	210	155·0	.....
29	Ponra ...	Ditto ...	28	52	34	100	108	186	138	100	134	67	130	201	149·0	.....
30	Dokan Singh ...	Ditto ...	29	55	39	102	110	184	147	103	137	77	130	217	154·4	.....

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9: Risley G-5 (1886-1888) 1891
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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LEPCHA TRIBE OF DARJILING HILLS.

TABLE II—*concluded.*

Number.	Name of Subject.	District of birth.	Age.	Measurements.														Remarks.
				Nasal height.	Nasal width.	Bimalar breadth.	Nasomalar breadth.	Cephalic length.	Cephalic breadth.	Minimum frontal breadth.	Maximum bizygomatic breadth.	Height, vertex to inter-superciliary point.	Height, vertex to tragus.	Height, vertex to chin.	Stature in C. M.	Weight in grammes.		
31	Bachu ...	Darjiling	30	50	37	101	106	182	141	96	135	79	130	204	152·0	.....		
32	Koman Sinh ..	Ditto ...	26	50	35	103	110	185	147	102	141	82	133	216	152·0	.....		
33	Sepraka ...	Ditto ...	28	53	36	107	116	189	147	103	142	89	141	222	153·4	.....		
34	Ramba ...	Ditto ...	37	48	34	103	112	187	146	100	130	78	122	201	153·4	.....		
35	Sungar ...	Ditto ...	26	57	35	102	112	191	149	105	142	86	129	231	167·4	.....		
36	Ribu ...	Ditto ...	27	53	36	105	116	181	151	101	136	90	129	226	159·4	.....		
37	Adung ...	Ditto ...	30	53	35	97	106	181	153	100	132	80	131	212	160·2	.....		
38	Tunda ...	Ditto ...	45	54	37	110	124	185	144	104	137	84	135	221	162·0	.....		
39	Tasa ...	Ditto ...	26	55	38	108	118	175	148	103	140	72	129	221	158·0	.....		
40	Hansi ...	Ditto ...	40	53	36	100	110	187	146	101	134	75	138	218	153·0	.....		
41	Bahadur ..	Ditto ...	27	55	35	99	108	181	147	99	140	79	129	221	160·0	.....		

42	Talman Sinh ...	Ditto ...	45	50	40	102	106	174	157	105	140	83	134	212	154·2	.....	
43	Kaen Sinh ...	Ditto ...	35	50	40	105	114	193	148	103	141	86	135	221	153·4	.....	
44	Tasinh ...	Ditto ...	37	47	38	98	104	180	150	102	140	94	136	221	152·4	.....	
45	Absian ...	Ditto ...	45	55	35	104	112	183	149	98	140	73	139	216	167·0	.....	
46	Powa ...	Ditto ...	28	54	34	104	112	188	150	104	141	94	137	233	157·4	.....	
47	Jitmun ...	Ditto ...	37	54	39	103	108	192	161	101	144	87	138	229	159·0	.....	
48	Arsinh ...	Ditto ...	27	54	35	98	106	183	148	104	137	81	140	223	158·4	.....	
49	Dowsinh ...	Ditto ...	38	51	35	102	114	182	147	101	143	72	129	212	156·6	.....	
50	Kolhari ...	Ditto ...	36	51	35	99	108	182	145	99	132	81	131	215	154·8	.....	
51	Keroki Sinh ...	Ditto ...	28	53	40	105	118	183	151	107	144	70	134	208	157·0	.....	
52	Shaimtu ...	Ditto ...	25	53	37	105	110	178	147	104	140	90	137	222	164·2	.....	
53	Shohar ...	Ditto ...	45	60	36	101	112	195	147	101	139	75	140	217	166·4	.....	
54	Silmu ...	Ditto ...	40	59	40	106	110	190	153	104	136	77	139	219	156·8	.....	
55	Pasinh ...	Sikkim ...	40	44	33	...	...	179	144	98	132	86	147	222	153·6	54431·0	
56	Lempu ...	Darjeeling ...		42	34	...	...	178	150	100	134	91	136	215	156·0	51709·4	
57	Maktang ...	Nepal ...	...	45	36	...	...	187	150	114	138	87	142	220	162·5	58966·9	
	Average ...	.....	...	51·6	34·7	106·4	115·1	183·5	146·7	103·5	137·5	78·5	133·5	217·0	157·0	55082·4	

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11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

farming must already have been effected by the Rong in very early times. 205 174

Gorer believes that the Rong were hunters about three hundred years ago, and that they carried on a little farming with dry rice and millet and kept a few cattle. When the Bhutanese and the Nepalese overran the land, the Lepchas withdrew into the forests, where they gave up farming and lived solely by hunting. When peace was restored they again took up to farming.[100]

(*l*) The Anthropological classification of the Rong

There are two basic types among the Lepchas which have to be clearly differentiated. The one with the long small face, the high forehead, the high narrow nose, and the well-defined eye-brow prominences; the eye is mostly without the Mongolian fold (if the upper lid droops it does not cover the inner corner of the eye). The face is also well-modelled; the cheek bones are not very prominent. The form of the head is mesocephalic or dolichocephalic. These people are taller and somewhat above the average height. The colour of the skin is light yellow. (Fig. 45). 142 141

The other type has a wide short face, a wide low forehead, well-defined supra-orbital ridges, a broad nose with depressed root and cheek bones that are somewhat more prominent. The eye often shows the Mongolian fold. The lips are thin, the shape of the head is brachycephalic, and the colour of the skin light yellow. Both the types have a slight growth of beard and a scanty growth of hair all over the body. The Mongolian spot occurs among most of the children of both types. The Lepchas call the spot "ri-om" and say that children without the spot are delicate. (Fig. 46)

The Rong have well-proportioned bodies. The muscles of the thigh and calves are particularly well-formed because of the fact that they are tireless mountain climbers. On the average however, the Rong are more lightly built than the neighbouring people. The women have very finely cut features.

100. op. cit. p. 110.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1
Sikkim AK3

Although they have not been influenced by Europeans the Lepchas have been very greatly influenced and their ways of life much modified by the contact and pressure of their more highly developed neighbours, the Sikkimese, the Nepali, and above all the Tibetans. The extent of this modification is almost incalculable, owing to the fact that there is no precise information available about these neighbouring societies. Tibet is, I suppose, the most written-about country in the world, but none of the literature that I know of is sufficiently detailed to allow comparisons between the Lepchas and any equivalent Tibetan group. Although there are many books on lamaism I have found none which describes the Lhatsun-pa subsect of the Nyingma-pa sect—the variation followed in Lingthem monastery—so that it is impossible to state definitely whether the Lepchas have ignored or considerably modified any aspect or aspects of the religion to which they have been converted. It is as though an investigator were trying to find out about Baptists and could only get information about Christianity in general, with some of the more obvious distinctions between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism noted.

With regard to the Sikkimese and non-Gurkha Nepali the situation is in some respects simpler; there is practically no information of any sort available about them. The *Gazeteer of Sikkim* published over forty years ago, contains some generalised statements about the habits of the Sikkimese; and the writings[9] and conversation of Major C. J. Morris who had studied the Gurkha soldiers under his command have given me information on certain points. Despite this slight help it is impossible in nearly every instance to state with any sort of certainty whether a given custom, belief or story is confined to the Lepchas, is shared by them with some other tribe, or has been relatively recently introduced from without. On the whole the only available source of information has been Lepcha tradition. Until other tribes in the same area have been studied (and the fact that Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet are practically closed to Europeans makes such studies in the near future problematical) precise questions of culture contact must remain unanswered.

The Lepchas are a mongoloid people, with, it would seem, slightly more pronounced Mongolian features, fairer complexions and greater stature than their present neighbours. Many of the children have carroty or auburn hair, but the hair of adults is always

[9] *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Gurkhas.* By Major C. J. Morris. Delhi 1937.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 [141] dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and 302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also 291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men 142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 7

CHALA MANDAL, THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE

TEMPA, THE DEPOSED MUKTAIR

[Facing p. 128]

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622
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[636]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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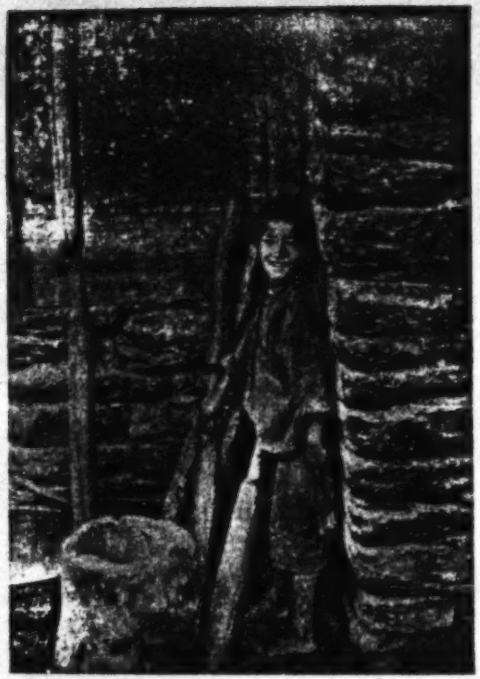
NINETY - YEAR - OLD SERVING, THE OLDEST MAN IN LINGTHEM

[facing p. 136]

TAKNEUM *YOUMI*, WHO ATE BOAR-PIG

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



CHÉLÉ, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY HIS AUNT

PATEK, THE HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD OF SIX AT 17. WITH HIM PONGRING, THE MONASTERY GUARDIAN

[facing p. 160]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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(*a*) LUMBA *CHITHEMBU*
(*b*) JIROONG *CHÉNÉ* IN TIBETAN HAT
(*c*) SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON WITH THE HAT OF HIS RANK

(*d*) THE PAINTER MONK, LHARIBU CHUJEN OF PANUNG
(*e*) ASHYOK *YOUMI*, WEARING THE OLD-FASHIONED WOVEN LEPCHA HAT

[facing p. 192]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.

[341]
142
292
793

[Facing p. 200]

I: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

751
291
142
412
846

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291
346
854

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

[facing p. 294]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

METHODS OF CARRYING CHILDREN

Tafoor amd his youngest daughter : Jiroong behind.

Tafoor's two middle daughters.

[Facing p. 304]

854
142
291

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291

[52]
[732]

Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)

Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[facing p. 368]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PICHI

MRS. DATOOP

142
291
[301]

[Facing p. 446]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE DATOOP FAMILY IN THE DOORWAY OF THE LHA-GONG

Standing : Mrs. Pembu, Pembu, Kondé (a " niece " ; I have just bandaged her).

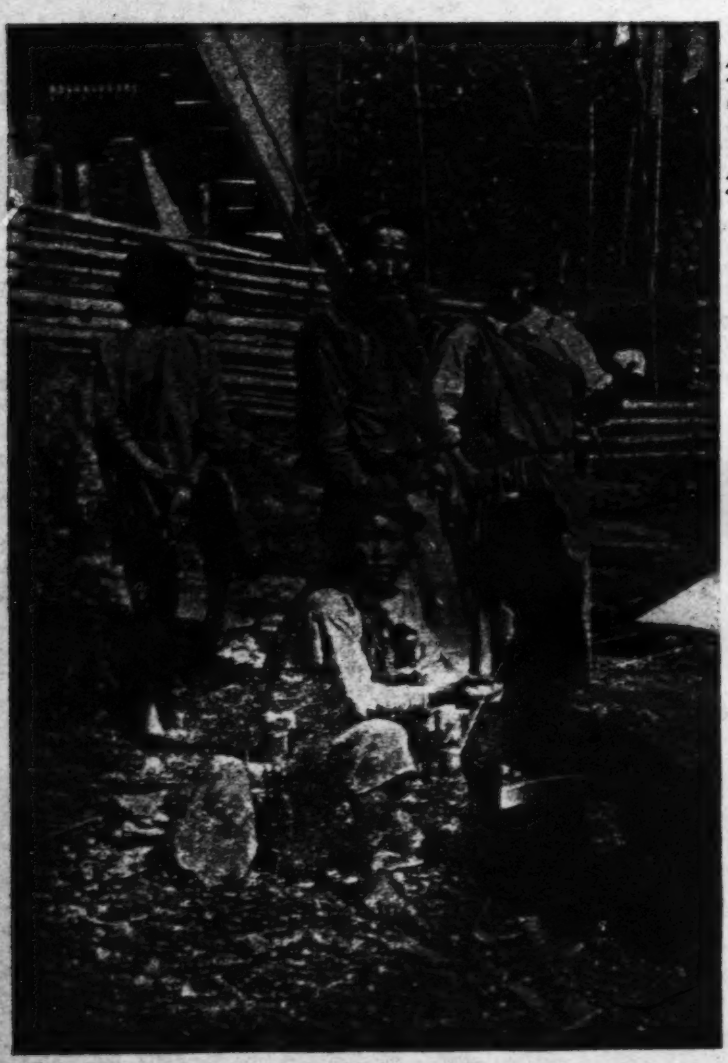
Seated : The younger married daughter, Kolok Tyong, the youngest son, Mrs. Datoop with Pembu's son Dugoo, and Datoop.

[facing p. 420]

192
291
301

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

192
291
417
415
283

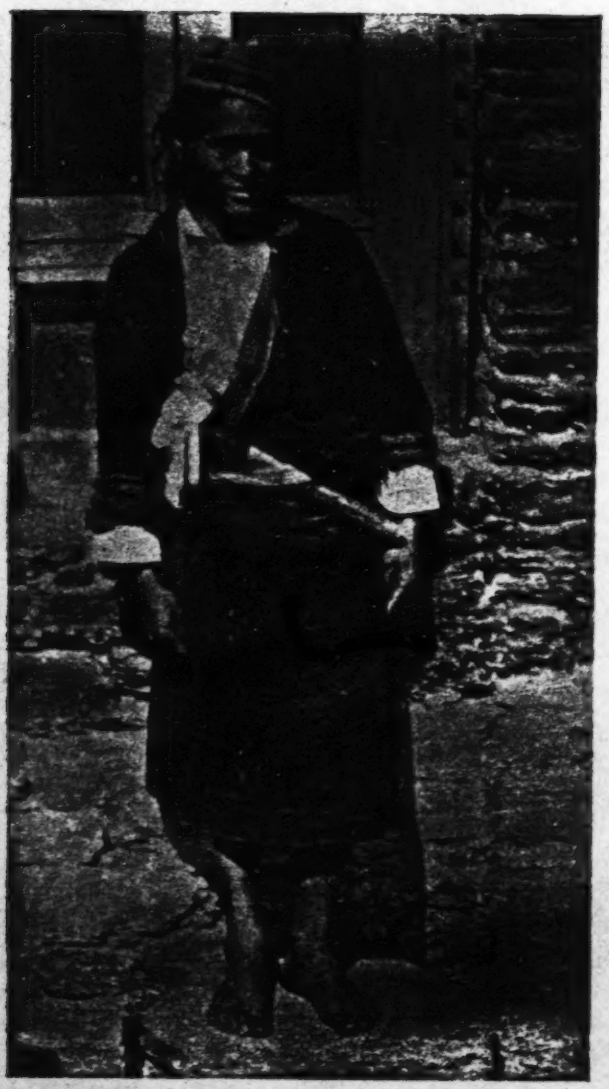


MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159X
142
291
412

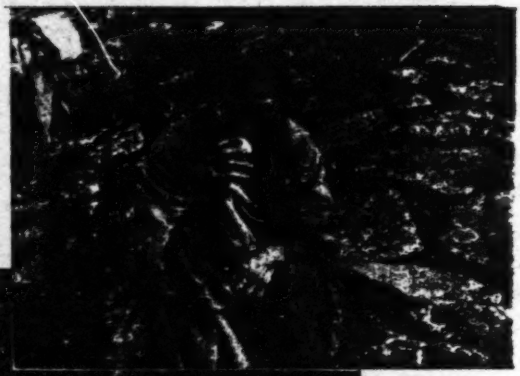


KURMA *GYAPÕN*

[facing p. 384]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787
142
291



The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

778
415
285

The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

782
291

Kahlyeu and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Tempa.

Grandfather.

[facing p. 16]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

301
888
291
142

Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

142
415
291

[facing p. 22]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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291
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Lepcha boy.

000

"A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in"; being otherwise a candid portrait of the author. *(Photograph by F. S. Smythe, reproduced by permission of the Mount Everest Committee, 1936).*

[facing p. 30]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard, and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
346

Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

142
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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

778
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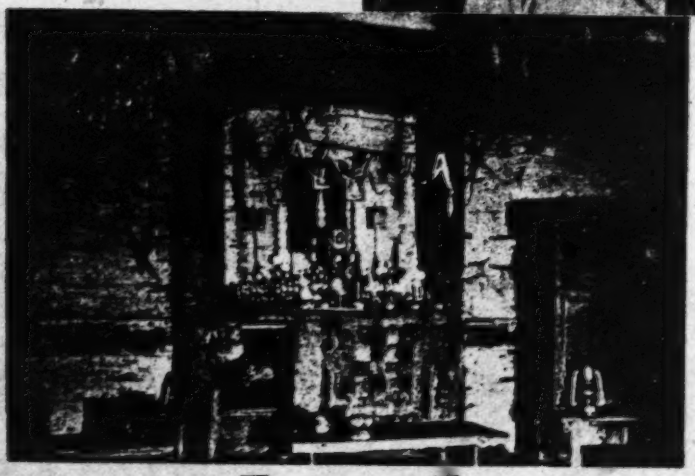
373



[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
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154

The second Dorje Lopön.

The senior Dorje Lopön.

[facing p. 84]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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159

Tafocr.

Chötembu.

[facing p. 85]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife, and on the left a cousin.

[21]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[facing p. 96]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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159

On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chôtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
273
415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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291
159

Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[441
622]

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756
755
301
142
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415

The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
212
142
291

Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

778
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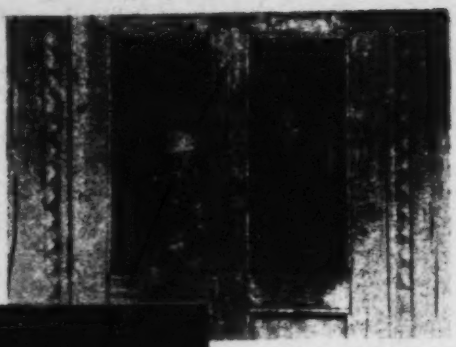
A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

2: Morris T -5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142
[531
34]

Happy family.



[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[305
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p.211]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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231
351
482
142
291

Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Ashyuk*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

[Facing p. 226]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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Karma.

142
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531
415
824

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p. 242]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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571
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351
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285
417
481

Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491

A Lepcha bridge.

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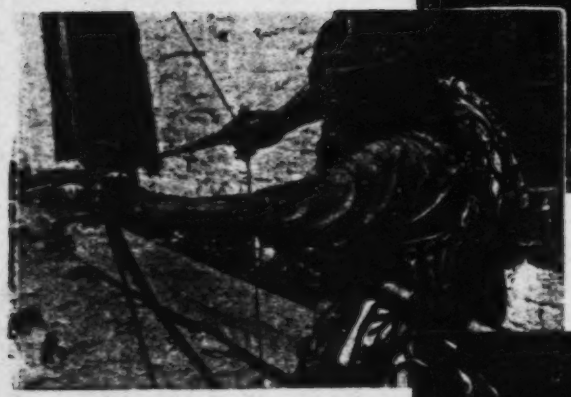
142



Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A 142 group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet—rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists.* The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is 181 their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are 182 supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when

[411] * I have seldom been able to insert my own wrist (which is smaller than the average) into the wooden guard which the Lepcha wears on his left, as a protection against the bow-string: it is a curved ring of wood with an opening at one side, through which, by a little stretching, the wrist is inserted.

114 opposed to the views of Mr. RISLEY [1]), Colonel DALTON [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers Drs. CAMPBELL and HOOKER, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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[142]
[291]

A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. HOFFMANN).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1890, IV. p. 5.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

farming must already have been effected by the Rong in very early times. 205 174

Gorer believes that the Rong were hunters about three hundred years ago, and that they carried on a little farming with dry rice and millet and kept a few cattle. When the Bhutanese and the Nepalese overran the land, the Lepchas withdrew into the forests, where they gave up farming and lived solely by hunting. When peace was restored they again took up to farming.[109]

(*l*) The Anthropological classification of the Rong

There are two basic types among the Lepchas which have to be clearly differentiated. 142 141 The one with the long small face, the high forehead, the high narrow nose, and the well-defined eye-brow prominences; the eye is mostly without the Mongolian fold (if the upper lid droops it does not cover the inner corner of the eye). The face is also well-modelled; the cheek bones are not very prominent. The form of the head is mesocephalic or dolichocephalic. These people are taller and somewhat above the average height. The colour of the skin is light yellow. (Fig. 45).

The other type has a wide short face, a wide low forehead, well-defined supra-orbital ridges, a broad nose with depressed root and cheek bones that are somewhat more prominent. The eye often shows the Mongolian fold. The lips are thin, the shape of the head is brachycephalic, and the colour of the skin light yellow. Both the types have a slight growth of beard and a scanty growth of hair all over the body. The Mongolian spot occurs among most of the children of both types. The Lepchas call the spot "ri-om" and say that children without the spot are delicate. (Fig. 46)

The Rong have well-proportioned bodies. The muscles of the thigh and calves are particularly well-formed because of the fact that they are tireless mountain climbers. On the average however, the Rong are more lightly built than the neighbouring people. The women have very finely cut features.

109. op. cit. p. 110.

142
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302

19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

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137
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Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

22. Lepcha hunter

[End Plate 8]

[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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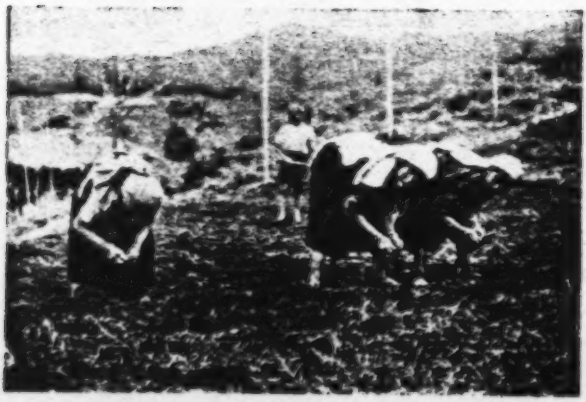
25. Lepcha children starting for field work



142
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243
462

26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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33. Lepcha woman

142
291

34. Lepcha woman

[End Plate 13]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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301
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35. Lepcha young woman

36. Lepcha young man

[End Plate 14]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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137
313

37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

854
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42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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301

43. Lepcha girl carrying a baby

[302]

44. Lepcha girl

[End Plate 18]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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302

45. Lepcha man

46. Lepcha man

[End Plate 19]
[End Notes 20-38 not processed]

41 Biswas D, E-3,4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
GOND AW 32
LEPCHA AK 5 •
SGL 143 •

TABLE I

Phenotype and Genotype Frequencies of the Santals compared with other Allied Ethnic Categories:

Ethnic Category	Phenotype Frequency					Genotype Frequency			Investigator
	No.	O	A	B	AB	p	q	r	
1. (a) Santal	407	31.70	21.38	35.63	11.30	.166	.258	.563	Sarkar and Sen
(b) Santal	339	33.04	20.94	34.81	11.21	.160	.240	.379	Sarkar
(c) Santal	68	25.00	23.53	39.71	11.76	...	...	...	Sarkar and Sen
2. Hill Male	242	41.32	24.79	27.27	6.61	.170	.185	.643	Sarkar and Sen
3. Plains Male	109	39.45	22.02	30.28	8.26	.156	.207	.628	Sarkar and Sen
4. Malpaharia	58	31.03	24.12	31.03	13.79	.186	.231	.557	Sarkar and Sen
5. Birjia	129	10.85	17.05	61.24	10.86	.198	.519	.329	Sarkar
6. Birhor	39	20.51	17.94	51.30	10.25	...	...	...	Sarkar
7. Birhor	102	31.37	35.29	23.53	9.80	...	...	...	Majumdar
8. Korku	140	20.00	28.57	37.86	21.05	.250	.313	.447	Macfarlane
9. Maria Gond	123	28.50	26.00	34.10	11.40	.204	.257	.534	Macfarlane
10. Munda	130	35.38	29.23	28.46	6.92	.219	.214	.577	Macfarlane
11. Ho	186	34.95	31.72	27.96	5.38	.	...	..	Majumdar
12. Lepcha	83	30.30	36.40	27.30	6.06	.241	.183	.550	Macfarlane

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. [13] [144] seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of [175] is large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three nturies, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the glish. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered [161] pchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of kkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in kkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were ployed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropo- [174] gists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere e as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet d Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has parently been found between the Lepcha language and some lect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no dition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the ople of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of [175] eir own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. [101] epcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the sian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word uld appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present rjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other [144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans [177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of 619] tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with 609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

671 that he will not commit such a crime again. Part of the fine
682 can be given towards the funeral expenses of the deceased."

Ordeal by oil.

671 "The oil must be supplied by the Government and must
695 be of the finest quality. It is boiled in a pan at least three inches deep. In the oil a black stone and a white stone are placed, of equal size and weight. He who has taken the oath must first wash his hands in water, in milk, and in widow's urine. His hand is then bound in a cloth and sealed. This is done a day or two before the ordeal, in order to give him a chance of confessing. The vessel with the boiling oil is then placed so that the stones cannot be seen, and he has to take one out. If he takes out the white one without any burn he wins his case. He who gets the black stone is sure to be burnt, and loses his case. Should he who gets the white stone be slightly burnt, it means that he has partially spoken the truth, and wins half his case."

Concerning adultery.

671 "For violating a woman of different position 3 oz. of gold
684 have to be paid to the woman's relations, and 4 gold srang to Government, besides many things in kind.

"For violation of a woman of the same position as the man 2 or 3 gold srang and several articles in kind must be paid.

"If the woman goes of her own accord to the man he has only to pay 1 gold srang and three kinds of articles.

"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

atures, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
e differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly
; from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is
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nd the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this
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nd slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently
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bsence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of
irect grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
elves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ent, and their foulness of person and garments renders
hem disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are
upportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
miable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without
he servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and
nconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided
qually amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or
rudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming
p and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 197] few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 797 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 [781] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 181 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [347] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 144 181 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

a mixed race calling the[illegible]ves Kumpa Rong, or Kumpa Lepchas; but they are emigrants from Tibet, having come with the first rajah of Sikkim. These people are more turbulent and bolder than the Lepchas, and retain much of their Tibetan character, and even of that of the very province from which they came; which is north-east of Lhassa, and inhabited by robbers. All the accounts I have received of it agree with those given by MM. Huc and Gabet.

Next to the Lepchas, the most numerous tribe in Sikkim is that of the Limboos (called "Chung" by the Lepchas); they abound also in East Nepal, which they once ruled, inhabiting elevations from 2000 feet to 5000 feet. They are Boodhists, and though not divided into castes, belong to several tribes. All consider themselves as the earliest inhabitants of the Tambur Valley, though they have a tradition of having originally emigrated from Tibet, which their Tartar countenance confirms. They are more slender and sinewy than the Lepchas, and neither plait their hair nor wear ornaments; instead of the ban they use the Nepal curved knife, called "cookree," while for the striped kirtle of the Lepcha are substituted loose cotton trousers and a tight jacket; a sash is worn round the middle, and on the head a small cotton cap. When they ruled over East Nepal, their system was feudal; and on their uniting against the Nepalese, they were with difficulty dislodged from their strongholds. They are said to be equally brave and cruel in battle, putting the old and weak to the sword,

to here: they are all described in various papers by Mr. Hodgson, in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal." The Dhurma people are numerous at Dorjiling; they are often runaways, but invariably prove more industrious settlers than the Lepchas. In the Himalaya the name Bhotan is unknown amongst the Tibetans; it signifies literally (according to Mr. Hodgson) the end of Bhote, or Tibet, being the eastern extreme of that country. The Lepchas designate Bhotan as Ayeu, or Aieu, as do often the Bhotanese themselves. Sikkim, again, is called Lhop, or Lho', by the Lepchas and Bhotanese.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

144 174 In the anthropology of the Rong, a two-fold classification is shown : a Mongoloid and a non-Mongoloid element. Our investigation has shown us this two-fold element in the religion and the economy of the Lepchas. From an anthropological standpoint we would like to draw a line of difference between the hunters and the farmers, thus forming two typical groups. The hunters with their hunting religion, sociology and economy represent the tall Rong type and are characterised by the larger physical build, the long small face, the open eye and the long small high nose. The farmers, on the other hand constitute the second group with shorter physiques, broad faces, broad nose, Mongolian eyefold, and prominent cheek bones.

Thus we see that the Rong bear evidences of a mixed culture, and this helps to solve many contradictions concerning them. Some believe that they have connections with the Tibetans. Others say that they wandered from the east along the Burma-Assam mountains. Our own belief is that the hunting component of the Rong are the primitive indigenous inhabitants of the forests of Sikkim. The farmers came from the east and have connections with such people as the Naga, the Lolo and the Miau.

197 174 144 The Rong language belongs to the pure group, that is to say, to the pronounless Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman languages. This bears out the facts that they experienced no Austro-Asiatic influence in the language as the Limbu did. Consequently the Austro-Asiatics cannot be held responsible for the non-Mongoloid element among the Lepchas. The only possibility is that among the pure Tibeto-Burmans and in a wider sense among the Tibeto-Chinese, there is an element purely non-Mongoloid and another that is Mongoloid. The study of the Rong therefore throws light on the Mongoloid problem and shows a formation of the Mongoloids within the Tibeto-Chinese Family (Tibeto-Burman is the large sub-group of this family of languages) and, in a very marked manner, among the farming peoples. This is in perfect agreement with the results of our research in Tibet. I found that the Tibetan Mongoloids are represented among the farming population. The cattle breeding nomads have very few Mongoloid features or none at all. Hence it is that

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [153]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [160]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
Fields.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Jiroong, who has extraordinarily precise memories of his infancy said that 'he was three when his sister was born. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth, which he witnessed and which frightened him very much. He was told that the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*. He was weaned in two ways; his mother's breasts were smeared with excrement, and a sister of his father took him away to her home and told him he must not cry because "Sanrong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him". He remembers vividly that for a week he cried every night for his mother's breast, and then resigned himself to doing without. For some time his aunt looked after him, sometimes keeping him with her at her house, and sometimes going to his home and sleeping with him.' In the same way Tobgé's wife had sent her son, aged a little over two, to live with her parents in their village a day's journey away. Since she was not pregnant again this conduct was disapproved of; it was considered to be a further illustration of Tobgé's irresponsibility and her immorality.

Normally a child is only suckled by its mother, but if the mother dies, or for any other reason becomes incapable of suckling the child, it may be suckled by another woman whom the child will call 'mother', or occasionally by the grandmother. A child does not have more than one nurse at a time, and would not be given a feed by a lactating woman during the mother's temporary absence. The reason given for this is that in taking another woman's milk the child would contract a debt which it would never be able to repay; and this debt would be a burden to it after its own death.

It is a general Lepcha belief that any woman who has once borne a child can produce milk spontaneously when a baby sucks; and this seems to be borne out by the fact that on occasion if the mother dies the grandmother will suckle the grandchild. I myself saw Kurma's mother-in-law suckling her granddaughter, though it was over twenty years since she herself had borne her last child. Some women too can produce milk without having borne a child; at first this milk is indigestible for the infant, but it is subsequently perfectly all right. If the mother dies the husband's breasts will very often swell; but they only produce a sort of lymph and not proper milk. As far as my observations and inquiries go it seems clear that Lepcha women lactate with far more facility than European women.

A youngest child will continue sucking until the mother's milk dries up, or until the child 'becomes ashamed'; this may continue

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FOOD

i

261 For the Lepchas, as for almost all primitive peoples, by far the most important subject in their lives is food. Far and away the greatest part of their lives is centred round food-getting; it is impossible to over-stress its importance. But because food-getting is so constant a preoccupation, and because it is fairly featureless and uneventful, it nearly always, it seems to me, receives far less attention than it deserves. The features chiefly dealt with by ethnologists, including of course the greater part of this book, are those which take place during the primitive's leisure. Some peoples, I am aware, centre their social and religious life about food; 771 but this is not the case with the Lepchas. Food-products play a considerable rôle in the objects of sacrifice, but with the lamas this aspect is not stressed; most ceremonial objects are made out of grain-flour and butter, but this is because they are the most convenient and easily accessible materials; by the time they have been fashioned the edible qualities of these objects are not apparent. A minor sacrifice is made when a new field is taken into cultivation for the first time, and prayers are said, usually by a layman, after each sowing; and the Mun make elaborate ceremonies, to be described later, yearly at the flowering of the cardamum, and at the sowing and gathering of dry rice. In the annual cycle of lamaist ceremonies there are a certain number which are devoted to the protection of crops from hail and predatory beasts, and, before the sowing starts, some seed is collected from each household and given a communal blessing at a monastery service; but these rites take an insignificant place in the yearly sum of religious ceremonies. Lepcha religion is above all occupied with health.

261 Food does however play a very important rôle in the Lepchas' emotional lives. Love, whether between spouses, friends, or 152 parents and children, is considered to be the result of mutual

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

261 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; 152 if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal 178 of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 supernatural qualities. The poison is meant to be a solid substance, but it does not act unless Hlatam has evil intentions towards the person to whom she gives it. Neither poison nor ill-will are sufficient by themselves; the combination of the two is necessary. The possession of this poison carries certain disadvantages; it cannot be got rid of, for then the supernatural attached to it would destroy the person who threw it away; and it is also necessary to employ it once ever so often or the supernatural will attack the possessor; if no external enemy is the victim it must be given to somebody in the owner's household.

Those who believe in the poison think that before she dies Hlatam will give the poison to her son Aga. If he were to proclaim her guilt during her life-time, people might trust him after her death; if however he says nothing they will fear him, even though he go through the gesture of throwing the poison into the water. Aga is almost the nastiest person in Lingthem; he has a squint and a sullen and leering expression, and is one of the few people on whom Lepchas are willing to pronounce moral judgements; two said of him vehemently that he was evil-minded. I considered him below average intelligence and somewhat malicious; it is possible that the universal fear and suspicion of his mother has rendered him surly and malevolent. Hlatam herself seemed a cheerful and rather bawdy-minded old lady, ever ready to joke; outside her own house people did not distinguish her in any way, but the majority said they were frightened to visit her and would not take food from her hands unless she tasted it first.

754 I personally do not believe in Hlatam's 'poisoning'; it reminds me of the accusation of Mary Baker Eddy that her third husband ● 152 was killed by 'arsenical poison mentally administered'.[8] At the same time it has seemed worth while to treat the subject fully for it is almost the only instance of suspected (and possibly repressed and transferred) aggression among the Lepchas. As will be seen later, all misfortunes, whatever their nature, are generally ascribed to the action of supernaturals, and even personal aggression is usually represented as being outside the aggressor's control. Hlatam has been converted into a sort of scape-goat; among Lepchas even motivated aggression is socially disapproved of; Hlatam is believed to exercise almost motiveless malevolence. In general theory her 'poison' is said to be useful for acquiring property and securing revenge; but in the case of her actual named victims there was no

[8] See *Mrs. Eddy* by E. F. Dakin. (London Scribner's 1929.) pp. 166–168, 227.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam. Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced 835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is [538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

●152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem- [195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual [831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand [832] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are 831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

proved to be jealous and possessive, and refused to allow her husband to sleep with Tafoor-mu. 595

Dunbi was the 'younger brother' (actually the son of a younger paternal uncle) of the Muktair; at the period when the second wife was brought home he was completely alone, for his parents, wife, and children had all died in a dysentery epidemic. The Muktair took him into his house, and there he so well consoled Tafoor-mu that she became pregnant. The Muktair thereupon offered her to Dunbi; he *asék*'d her with the symbolical gift of one pig, and the families separated. One year later the second wife died.

The position of Tafoor-mu is one of the saddest in Lingthem; formerly the wife of the most prosperous man in the neighbourhood, and with two prosperous sons, she is now married to the poorest and most feckless man in the village. She has borne him three daughters; the eldest is married away, the second lives with her half-brother, Tafoor—she is unbetrothed Prumtu, the girl with the squint—and the youngest is a child of six. Although Tafoor and Chudo give her occasional presents she lives and dresses poorly, and has to work hard to compensate for her husband's sloth. As far as I could observe, Tafoor and Chudo feel little love or respect for their unfortunate mother.

We in Europe make passionate and personal love one of the chief pivots round which our society moves; the Lepchas of Zongu have completely excluded it, and it is liable to be extremely disruptive when it does flare up. The normal emotional situation is one of reasonable affection founded on mutual rights and benefits; people love one another for statable and stated reasons. No love is considered automatic; it is not considered inevitable that parents should love their children nor brothers their brothers and sisters; it is merely considered probable, because their situations entail the mutual obligations on which love is supposed to rest. Unless people are strongly deviant Lepchas are chary of pronouncing judgement on their neighbours' characters; most people, they say, are much of a muchness. Consequently it is to be expected that arranged marriages will turn out well, unless one of the partners has a really bad character; since love is founded on mutual obligations and benefits, these mutual obligations can be set up between any two people. It is worth noting that all three men whose love stories are recounted above fall well outside the Lepcha norm. The Muktair was, it would appear, an exceptionally strong-willed and ambitious man, and his love affair started when he was living 152 581

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152 581 in foreign surroundings; also his second wife came from a mixed community. Katel and Aga on the other hand are both subnormal; they are foolish, suspicious and disliked.

152 831 For the Lepchas of Zongu sexual activity is practically divorced from emotion; it is a pleasant and amusing experience, and as much a necessity as food and drink; and like food and drink it does not matter from whom you receive it, as long as you get it; though you are naturally grateful to the people who provide you with either regularly. One of the most difficult of all concepts for the European to take into consideration is the non-European attitude to sexual activity; with us, explicitly on the part of men, sexual desirability is most intimately bound up with aesthetic considerations. Although there may be individual disagreement as to who are included in the terms, potential sexual partners are divided into the categories of 'attractive' and 'unattractive'; and we believe that only perverts or prostitutes will have anything to do with the second category. Primitive people, I believe, do not make this distinction; there is social kudos to be acquired from being the known possessor of a beautiful wife or mistress; but for temporary sexual gratification any willing partner is equally acceptable. I found it extremely difficult to accept the notion that most of the men with young and pretty wives at one time or another slept with the two sixty-year-old haridans who were the promiscuous women of Lingthem; but as far as I can make out their invitations were never refused.[13] Fourteen-year-old Chimpet gave a good illus-

[13] Professor Malinowski records a similar situation in the Trobriands in *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge: London, 1929) page 247–8: 'The (medical officer) was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with a very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhea, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman, so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. . . .' 'I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic but regular intercourse.' Professor Malinowski finds this notion so repulsive that he accounts for it 'by their manner of carrying out this physiological activity', which in the Trobriands may entail very slight physical contact. This explanation does not however hold good for the Lepchas; see Chapter Twelve, p. 330. I think primitives dissociate, in a way we cannot, the public attitudes of parading a desirable partner, and the private ones of physiological gratification. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in the Somerset village where I live potentially jealous situations arise in the case of people whom I personally would consider, either through age or ugliness, to be almost sexless.

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tion of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had 152
ice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accom- 831
nied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he
oyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does
t want to marry the girl because he does not like her.

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with 595
field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because
has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbour-
od, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him
l to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted
hout any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free
he choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make
request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly
f he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events.
e co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights,
all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, [843]
l he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception
nly made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence
kes his paternity a physiological impossibility.

n the recent past there have only been two cases of such poly-
ry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above,
o first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger
ther'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who
red his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a
a attached to another village who was almost always away, so
t the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his
red wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a
e, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless
two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as
liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advan-
es for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an
way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an
a adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife
en you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband
the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor
unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that
re are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of [835]
yandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with
r husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are
iously suspended.

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new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

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754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

X 159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls
[195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervous-
● [152] ness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) 123
or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised [152] me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a [515] different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you 431
go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *asék* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the 431
Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving 123
more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 661 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable
154 to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of
[762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

● 152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying
[673] to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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window with his back to us for a few minutes, before he went away looking quite different to his usual boisterous self. He did not return home till the evening. On another occasion Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged nineteen, came up to have a wound on his hand dressed, after which he went to the kitchen to have a cup of tea. A little later I sent and asked him to come and talk to me and he sent back a reply that he didn't want to. A couple of days later he returned to have his hand dressed again, and I then asked him why he thought I would give him medicine when he would not come and talk to me? He was almost dumb with embarrassed shame and tried to slink away; I had to employ a good deal of tact before I could get him to accept the medicine. Had I made such a remark in front of witnesses it is quite possible that he would have tried to take poison.

Considering the size of the community suicide is fairly frequent among the Lepchas. There have been six suicides in Lingthem and the neighbouring smaller villages in the last twenty years, and in every case the suicide has been immediately subsequent to a public reproof. In five out of the six cases the suicides were relatively young men; the sixth case was that of a young girl of Panung who drowned herself because her uncle and parents reproved her for her laziness and promiscuity. Chélé's father killed himself because his wife and her family publicly blamed him for neglecting her and his work while she was ill. Kurma's uncle killed himself because he was blamed for not keeping his wife in order, and Kurma's brother because he was blamed for his uncle's suicide.[5] The possibility of suicide from grief is admitted, but the only case I heard of was of a woman in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum who killed herself shortly after the death of her husband, and the details of this case were not properly known. Women kill themselves by drowning, men usually with the aconite poison they use on their arrows.

Besides the successful suicides there have been a number of suicide attempts which have been thwarted. It seems to me probable that a Lepcha can establish his innocence on a specific charge by going through the gestures of committing suicide in such situations that he is bound to be saved; some stories of attempted suicide which I heard seemed to me not to have been intended seriously; they were theatrical performances arranged in such a manner as to convince everybody of the sincerity of the libelled person without

[5] See Part Three for fuller details, Chapter Fifteen, p. 396–397.

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186 The Lepchas are remarkably tolerant. They are perfectly ready to admit the validity for other peoples of habits and customs which for them would be shocking or disgusting. For example the marriage arrangements of the Nepali, and some of the sexual habits of the Tibetans would be horrifying and disastrous if committed by Lepchas; the Lepchas know of these habits, and are inclined to laugh at them; but they do not reproach the Nepali or Tibetans for them, do not try and convince them that they are wrong, and do not fear moral contamination through contact with them. This tolerance is not accompanied however by any feelings of inferiority; the very strong sentiment of fundamental equality among individuals is carried over to a sentiment of fundamental equality between groups. Some people are richer, more industrious or cleverer than their neighbours; similarly the Tibetans are more learned and the Europeans richer than the Lepchas; but since the Lepchas are as learned and as rich as they can be, they do not, I think, feel any fundamental inferiority in comparison with more favoured groups, any more than they do in comparison with more favoured individuals. It is worth remembering in this connection how Gongyop in his prophetic dreams under the possession of Padem *rum* would visit the rulers of neighbouring states and Europeans and would be treated by them as an equal. It is noteworthy that the richer households and the learned lamas who can read do not, [554] except when the lamas are performing their special functions, demand or obtain any special preferential treatment.

[152] This tolerance of the Lepchas can be ascribed I think partly to contentment, and partly to indifference. Straightforward consumption—food, drink and sex—fills the forefront of their desires and aims in life; provided these physical needs are satisfied—and for the majority they are continuously satisfied—the other aspects of life are emotionally of less importance. In their dealings with the supernatural they are particularly tolerant and receptive; it is important to be able to deal with the devils but they have not any deep-set preference for one special method of dealing with them. Completely alien methods will be tried, and, if they prove satisfactory, adopted, however little they may be integrated into their general outlook; thus they have accepted the taboo on menstruating women in the treatment of cardamum, and retained the insistence on virginity in the sacrifices to the people of Mayel, though except in these instances virginity is a meaningless concept and menstruating women suffer under no disabilities. This capacity of accepting

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor 776
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which 152
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

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591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in the same house, and maternal relations generally live far away. If, however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal grandfather or married aunt children can always go and pay them short visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and who was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger children, used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, the Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he would go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his family, and at other times he would run away there of his own accord for a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, however, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except for these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhappy at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child in Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discussed earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distantly related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chano's second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasionally threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhappy but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turning into a bad boy, a *tané*.

858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhappy time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children are not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. But most of the children realise, though perhaps they would not enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity and occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary preliminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adult status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

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person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15. 765 [688]

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the 765 152

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765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
764 formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

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157 a lot, but very slyly; thus when in her presence he was explaining
159 to us the way marriage horoscopes are cast he pointed out with considerable emphasis that the books foretold without any question that she would die young, very many years before he did.[6]

The most general excessive quality among the Lepchas, particularly the men, is excessive timidity; thus Chano, Gongyop and his son, Pembu, Jiroong and Nahyeun were all timid to a point where this timidity became an active disability. The Lepcha ideal calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility, but it does call for it, and these people gave the impression of being permanently fixed in the dependent stage. Thus Pembu, who should have been running his own household, was almost entirely dependent on his mother for advice and help, Jiroong on his wife. Others fall short of the Lepcha ideal personality by lack of intelligence or industry; among these were Katel, Dunbi, Ashyok, and Aga. Of these Dunbi was temperamentally lazy and the other three were foolish and incompetent by the standards of the culture. Tobgé, and to a lesser extent Dadool, exceeded the Lepcha bounds of irresponsibility and licentiousness permitted to young men.

Among the younger men Rigya, who was born in 1915, to a certain extent aided and abetted by his adoptive elder brother Nariya, was unique in being an active miser. He was always shabbily dressed, and unlike all the other Lepchas, never made us presents, though he spent a great deal of time hanging round us, gaping at our possessions, and asking for presents; he had particularly a magpie desire for illustrated papers, and was always asking for pictures of war 'because he had never seen anything like them and was amazed'. He was given quite a number of papers, but one day I told him he could not have any more because other people wanted them. (One of the very few times I saw a
[152] Lepcha boy cry was on one occasion when two mothers each accompanied with sons about eight years old came up for medicine; one of the boys asked for a paper and I gave it to him and went on dressing the cut; the mother of the other child asked rather timidly if I had not a paper for her boy as well, and I then saw this latter holding his mother's hand, with tears streaming down his face; he was crying hard but so quietly that I had not realised it though I was a couple of yards away.) A couple of days after I had refused to give Rigya any more papers he arrived early one morning to repeat his demand, bringing with him as a present the smallest

[6] See Appendix III, b.

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291

[52]
[732]

Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)

Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[facing p. 368]

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offensive and defensive warfare; whether they develop this form of social behaviour would appear to depend to a great extent on the density of population in a given area. When agriculture has developed so far that one man's labour can produce sufficient food for more than the labourer (and his immediate dependents) slave-raiding becomes an economic proposition.

So far we have been considering aggression in its purely destructive aspect of fighting, competition and destruction. But I think that is far too narrow a definition of the term and that destruction and rivalry are only two of the aspects of aggression. I should like to suggest that aggression should be defined as one aspect of *the urge to obtain mastery over the environment*; this urge is universal, but the strength with which it is manifested depends on the individual temperament, and the forms its overt expression takes depend partly on the material circumstances and partly on the social organisation in which the individual is born. Aggression or mastery can be manifested towards objects and ideas (the supernatural, for example) as well as towards people, and it can be constructive or destructive; there is as much release of aggression in building or creating as in destroying.

121 With this wider definition of aggression Sumner's hypothesis that each society (or rather the individuals composing it) have to 152 externalise a certain amount of aggression takes on an added validity; but his 'other-groups' must be redefined to mean the external world and the supernatural, and not merely members of other societies. I should like to suggest the generalisation that the amount of destructive aggression manifested towards other men in primtiive societies is negatively correlated with the difficulty of maintaining life in the given physical environment or social organisation. In other words the harder the environment and the less material development there is, the less will destructive aggression be overtly manifested. Socially allowed destructive aggression is the product of economic security and leisure. If I am correct in this statement the type picture of the earliest men as uninhibitedly destructive and jealous until they were made tolerant, will have to be changed to that of hard-working and generally socially unaggressive men developing jealousy and fighting as they acquired control over their food supply and the dangerous animals in the environment. If this statement is correct the Lepchas' failure to develop any pattern of external aggression may be considered to have been conditioned by their isolation, their low material development, and the difficulties

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of wresting a livelihood from their environment. It would seem probable also that the environment has been responsible for keeping the operative social group a small one and in that respect may have been a reinforcing cause of the Lepchas' failure to develop towards feudalism. The small local and kinship group is now firmly implanted in Lepcha culture and it is interesting to note how, under contemporary settled conditions, the Lepchas still oppose all attempts to weld them into bigger units; their treatment of the new office of Muktair,[8] even though it was created by the powerful Court, is extremely illuminating.

V

The reasons given above for the Lepchas' lack of destructive aggression outside their group may be adequate; the lack of aggression inside the group cannot be explained in such general terms. It is possible that since, in their major occupation of getting food, the Lepchas felt themselves more opposed by natural phenomena (personified into supernatural forces) than by other men, they to a certain extent carried the same attitude into their social life and regarded the supernatural, and not their fellows, as their chief cause for discontent. From the common-sense point of view it could be argued, as Sumner suggests, that in the small groups of which Lepcha society was composed the value of each individual worker was so great to the group as a whole that all potentially aggressive situations whereby the group might be threatened with the loss of the worker had to be avoided. Unfortunately it cannot be assumed of any human group that they act on common-sense reasons.

Though the reasons for the Lepchas' almost complete suppression of destructive aggression within their group would appear to be impossible to discover, it may be worth while noting their methods of doing so. This suppression of aggression can be viewed from two aspects: there are the social rules for its control, and there is the treatment of the new recruits to the society, the babies. From the social point of view, the most obvious is their strong social sanction against quarrelling; the Lepchas have not admitted a single situation in which quarrelling or vengeance-seeking is permissible. This may be regarded as a legal sanction against quarrelling. Next in importance from the legal point of view is the social arrangement of all sexual relationships so as to exclude jealousy. These arrangements have been detailed in Chapter Six but

[8] See Chapter Five, pp. 123–126.

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121 may be briefly recapitulated. Parents have no rôle in the sexual life
152 of their children; exclusive sexual possession is legally impossible; the younger are favoured against the elder (since they have access to their elders' spouses) and the elder are prevented from overbearing the younger by the equation of ' younger siblings' ' spouses with children-in-law. Although nowadays not fully employed they have the legal device of repairing unsatisfactory marriages without the enmity of the two groups involved by exchanging the unsatisfactory spouse for another member of the same group.

In the Lepcha treatment of young children there seem to me to be two constant stresses of almost equal importance for the avoidance of overt aggression. One of these stresses has been already fully documented in Chapter Eleven; it is the immediate and willing satisfaction of all the infant's expressed physical desires. Save under exceptional circumstances, or through illness, the Lepcha infant does not apparently suffer to any appreciable extent from hunger, discomfort or cold. From the point of view of physical well-being Lepcha babies appear to experience the minimum of frustration and therefore it would seem that in the first months of life there are few experiences to evoke aggression. But parallel with this gratification of physiological appetites there is the considerable physical restraint which the babies endure through passing the majority of their waking hours firmly tied to the back of their guardian, and also the complete lack of encouragement which their elders give to the babies' earlier self-maximating activities and attempts to acquire body techniques and physical independence. Young babies get no social approval from their attempts to crawl and walk; on the contrary a mobile baby is more likely to be picked up and replaced on its guardian's back, since it is there easier to control. The two methods by which babies in our society would appear to win adult approval in their second year are successful sphincter control and the acquirement of body techniques and speech. Sphincter control is paid little attention to by adult Lepchas until a considerably later age, and attempts at acquiring body techniques are met with, at the best, indifference. Very young the Lepcha baby learns that social approval is to be obtained, not by self-assertion, but by passivity. The baby's self-maximating efforts are not actively punished, but they are discouraged by indifference; its passivity and conformity are constantly rewarded.

I think it is legitimate to trace a connection between this partial extinction of self-assertion in early childhood and the adult Lepcha's

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tendency to judge their fellows in their rôle of members of society, and not as personalities. This impersonal attitude to their fellows seems to me the chief operative factor for the suppression of competition and aggression in adult life. The Lepchas stress constantly social behaviour and minimise individual character variations. They stress the resemblance between individuals, they minimise their differences. This constant stress on the resemblance of individuals obviously makes for a low development of the ego, a lack of internal competition, a lack of contrast. The Lepchas minimise the most obvious contrasts, between rich and poor, between men and women, between lamas and illiterate laymen, to a great extent between adults and children. They recognise no social goals which can only be achieved at the expense of others, they have no social situations which separate rights and duties.

Although, as I have shown, this lack of personal aggression is dysgenic in the Lepchas' state of social development, the excess of personal and national aggression appears to be equally dysgenic in our own state of social development. To minimise this aggression will it be necessary for us too to view our neighbours impersonally, to tone down all the contrasts in personality, talent and achievement which have resulted in the greatest glories as well as the greatest horrors of our society? Or is there another solution?

[p. 452 is blank]

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these is jealousy. The first thing to determine is the biological status of jealousy. Is it an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy human mind? Or is it the fruit of a convention which can be changed? No change in convention is going to remove the hunger problem, or even the more sublimable sex problem. Does jealousy rank with these? The answer is, yes and no. I believe that nine-tenths of all jealousy manifested by wives and by husbands and by lovers is but a conventional perversion of the instinct of fear; and this fear arises from the taking for granted of the monogamic tradition, as though it were in accordance with instinct and with right. Yet monogamy, except during those short periods of 'being in love,' is, for live people, the merest convention."

Having myself grown up in a culture in which jealousy is closely connected with sex and marriage I found it difficult at first to realise that this feeling is definitely not "an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy mind." And yet there is little doubt that this is the case. It may be argued that the evidence from a single primitive tribe is no evidence at all, but this is tantamount to saying that ethnology has no practical value. It should be remembered, however, that since our own society has grown so complicated it is only in the examination of primitive peoples that we have any suitable laboratory material for the study of these urgent social problems. Most so-called primitive societies live relatively simple and uncomplicated lives; and by confining ourselves to a small and self-contained community it is still possible to watch the behaviour of the individual in the group, and, conversely, to see what reaction the group has on him.

578 It would not be difficult to make out a case proving that
152 jealousy is inherent in any capitalist society. It is true that the Lepchas are a good example of primitive socialism, but we are here not concerned with that side of the question. The point is that these people have realised that in the conditions in which they live sexual jealousy would make life

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they
have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no
psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this
reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's
sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in
the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passion-
ate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of
restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry
if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his
wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you
should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about,
and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he
will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-
ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each
Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will
naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can
do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it
will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one
another and in course of time will give up sleeping together.
It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is
to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the
woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother,
to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time,
and while the subject is not generally discussed among
brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if
asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

I hope that I have now made it clear that among the Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [153]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [161]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people 626
who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to 157
allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters 828
of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to 153●
describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

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153 Numbers are practically meaningless to them and
802 numerical concepts play a very small rôle; in any question demanding numbers they will nearly always give in answer three or four alternatives. In some situations this is almost ludicrous; except for one or two lamas nobody knows his own age or even that of his youngest children in years; they all know the year they were born and what year they are now in, but if a child was born in Dog year they would be quite unable to work out its age today (1937 was Ox year and the child would be four) and they might just as well say that the child was two or eight. More than that, if you asked a person how many people were living in his house he would almost certainly get the number wrong; he could naturally recite immediately the names or rather the kinship terms of the people in his house; but it does not cross his mind to tot up the number and it is a mental operation of which nearly all Lepchas are incapable. The Lepchas count by twenties and use their fingers for all calculations; they count with the thumb against the fingers, putting the thumb on the base of the little finger for one, the first joint for two, the second joint for three, the tip for four and then going down to the base of the next finger for five and so on. There used to be long consultations to try and work out in how many days a fixed date for a calendrical feast would arrive; and on one occasion everybody except one lama arrived a day late, and the Muns frequently made a mistake of a day or more for their special festivals. They are quite incapable of working out what money they should receive for their cardamum; they may know that they have ten maunds and that each maund is worth Rs. 12; but unless they use sticks or some other memory guide they have absolutely no idea of what the total should be. The Mandal has to keep in his head the taxes due from each household but he does this by remembering the words and not the figures.

153 The Lepchas do not dramatise; and they do not alter their pace of thought or action except in emergencies which for the reason that they demand such alteration are considered particularly unpleasant. My impression is that the Lepchas think much more slowly than either the Nepali or the Indians, but since my knowledge of both these races is slight this impression is of little value; they certainly think quicker than the ordinary Somerset farm labourer, though infinitely slower than a European town dweller. I got the impression that they talked quickly, but that I think was due to the fact that the language was an unfamiliar one, and that I was straining to catch every shade of meaning.

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or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ro*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

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V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and
●154 self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of
[762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the
[673] word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154 ●
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

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new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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actually endangering his life.[6] One of the reasons for believing in the guilt of Hlatam the 'poisoner' was that both she and her son Aga must have been aware of what was said about them and neither had demonstrated their innocence by attempting to kill themselves.

Verbal threats of suicide are occasionally made, but they are taken little notice of. When they are drunk Dunbi, because he is poor, and Katel, because his second wife won't sleep with him, threaten to kill themselves. Children also occasionally threaten to kill themselves if they think they are unjustly scolded or ill-treated; when he was young Pembu, an exceptionally nervous man, used to make such threats, and Chano's younger son, who was brought up by an 'aunt' also does so occasionally; to such threats the parents retort that nobody wants such a naughty child.[7]

With this ever-present possibility of provoking shame and even suicide it can be seen that malicious gossip and scandal assume very considerable emotional importance. People are worried as to what their neighbours are saying about them behind their backs; one or two even said that the reason for having '*ingzong*' (special friends) in one's own village was so that if people spoke ill of you you would have somebody whom you can completely trust to tell you what is being said. My impression is that very little scandal is spoken, and that when people did discuss potentially scandalous or disagreeable situations they did so very seriously and with hushed voices, taking care that no children or ignorant neighbours should listen to what they were saying.

The potential influence of hostile talk has I think further results: it is a very strong sanction to encourage Lepchas to conform to the approved methods of behaviour; and it also makes people chary of expressing judgements about their neighbours. If you ask a Lepcha who in his village has any outstanding quality, whether good or bad, he will almost certainly reply that everybody is much of a muchness. In many ways I think this does represent the real Lepcha attitude; affection is based on mutual services, not on emotion, and consequently difference in character is of much less importance than difference of treatment. Only character traits strongly opposed to Lepcha ideals were spontaneously commented on, and those seldom; cruelty, avarice, untruthfulness,

[6] For an example of this see the story of the attempted suicide of Jiroong's sister in Chapter Sixteen, p. 428.

[7] See also the history of Chélé's threats of suicide; Chapter Six, pp. 164–165.

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people 626
who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to 157
allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters 828
of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to 153
describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

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186 and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The 781 Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

157 Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

[578] This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood.

854 [157]

iv

In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not,

858

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DEVIANTS AND DEFECTIVES

i

128 Except when I have used individual illustrations the four chapters of Book Two have been written about an abstraction called 157 'the average Lepcha'. Of course such an abstraction has no more real existence than 'the average man' or 'the man in the street' dear to European and American journalists; he is a compromise between the ideal personality set up for the Lepchas by themselves and the observable behaviour of the majority of the Lepchas in Lingthem. It is the Lepcha stereotype who has been described.

157 The Lepcha stereotype is unaggressive, sociable, hard-working, constantly good-humoured, greatly interested in direct consumption (eating, drinking and copulation), fundamentally optimistic. The relationship of the Lepcha stereotype with his fellows is based rationally on mutual benefits and obligations; very little stress is placed on personal affection and practically no interest is taken in, and no allowance made for, individual character or temperament. The Lepcha insists very firmly on the independence of the adult individual and the family group; no attempt is made to dominate or exploit others, and any attempt by others to dominate or exploit is resisted as actively as the rules of the culture permit. The Lepcha identifies himself strongly with his family group and with his [619] immediate community—the village; the identification with the tribe as a whole is much less strong, and one of the Lepchas' chief social weaknesses is that, except in the case of serious crime, the Mandal and inhabitants of one village have little influence over the inhabitants of any other village under a different Mandal. The Lepcha stereotype calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility and almost unquestioning confidence from younger people in their elders.

128 Although this stereotype does not, I think, correspond exactly to the behaviour or attitudes of any one person, it is not for that

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

128 reason valueless. It represents the ideal towards which the Lepchas strive and to which they attempt to mould their children, and it is in the deviations from this imposed stereotype that the greater number of psychological difficulties for the Lepchas arise. As such it has preponderating weight in the formation of individual character, and constitutes a point of reference from which deviation can be measured.

157 Deviations fall into two groups, negative and positive; people may lack some characteristic or qualification called for by the cultural x159 stereotype; or they may manifest characteristics and types of behaviour which exaggerate cultural characteristics, or they may have temperamental qualities definitely opposed to the cultural stereotype. Judged by such rigorous standards there is probably nobody who is not slightly deviant. There are, however, two people in Lingthem, Chala Mandal and Tafoor, in whom I could discern no temperamental cause for psychological discomfort. Both had reasons for a certain distress, but they were external ones; the Mandal was unhappy because he had no son, Tafoor, I think, slightly disappointed because he had neither the wealth nor position of his late father the Muktair. These two people practically embodied the Lepcha ideal, the Mandal for the layman and Tafoor for the lama; Tafoor's household also approached more nearly than any other to the Lepcha ideal.

[158] Owing to the Lepchas' great tolerance of—or rather indifference, to—shades of character, the maladjusted tend to be sociotic[1] rather than neurotic deviants. The only temperament type to which the Lepchas manifest constant opposition is the aggressive and domineering personality; the person who wishes to domineer or to command is constantly thwarted; to paraphrase Saki's epigram, there may be people born to command among the Lepchas, but they never find anybody born to obey them. The most outstanding of these aggressive characters were Tempa, who was described in Chapter Five,[2] and Kurma, whose story is given at length in the next chapter. It is worth noting that these two are also sociotically maladjusted; Tempa is a foreigner from outside Zongu, reared in a mixed community, and living under the slightly humiliating condition of resident son-in-law (*komok myok*); Kurma was adopted by an elderly couple as a little boy, was very unhappy

[1] This term was first used by Dr. Moreno to distinguish socially maladjusted from temperamentally maladjusted people.

[2] See pp. 124–126.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in his adopted parents' house, and finally ran away. Besides his aggressive characteristics Kurma shared with Tempa a tendency to boastful lying in an attempt to give himself greater importance than he possessed, and a desire for money for its own sake. Kurma was also unique among the adult Lepchas in getting obviously drunk.

The foreigners, the people not born in Zongu, are the most obviously disturbing elements. Tempa and his sister, Mrs. Jiroong,[3] caused more trouble than all the other inhabitants of Lingthem put together. In his earlier years, too, the first Dorjé Lapoon, who is half Tibetan, caused a very great deal of disturbance.[4]

Owing to the very late psychological maturing of the Lepchas it is difficult to speak with confidence of the characters of most of the men under thirty and of most of the women under twenty. Except where there was strongly marked deviance, such as in the cases of Chélé, and the two girls Prumtu and Kondé,[5] the younger people lived psychologically so much under the shadow of their elders that it was impossible to foresee how they would act when they were independent.

Mrs. Datoop and Lumba's first wife were both rather more independent than the Lepcha ideal type of woman calls for. Lumba's first wife insisted on living in a field-house because, although she got on well with her co-wife and step-children, she disliked living in a crowd and having to bend her wishes to the majority. Mrs. Datoop almost openly ruled her husband and her household; she was far more business-like and managing and practical than is necessary for a Lepcha woman. These qualities, however, did not bring her into conflict with the other Lepchas, for they were developed along lines congruent with the Lepcha culture; her excessive qualities were for the Lepchas good qualities and she held a high place in the general esteem. In a culture in which the temperament rôles of men and women are violently contrasted she would have been severely maladjusted, for she was almost the most 'virile' person (in the Occidental sense of the word) in Lingthem.

Mrs. Tafoor was rather more actively unhappy, for she was a woman of fairly violent temper and aggressively sexed; she was in the unfortunate position of a person who liked a quarrel and who could find nobody to quarrel with. Tafoor used to tease her

[3] See Chapter Five, pp. 140–142.

[4] See Chapter Sixteen, pp. 416–420.

[5] For Chélé see Chapter Six, pp. 164–165; for Prumtu, Chapter Eleven, p. 311; for Kondé, Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 a lot, but very slyly; thus when in her presence he was explaining
159 to us the way marriage horoscopes are cast he pointed out with considerable emphasis that the books foretold without any question that she would die young, very many years before he did.[4]

The most general excessive quality among the Lepchas, particularly the men, is excessive timidity; thus Chano, Gongyop and his son, Pembu, Jiroong and Nahyeun were all timid to a point where this timidity became an active disability. The Lepcha ideal calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility, but it does call for it, and these people gave the impression of being permanently fixed in the dependent stage. Thus Pembu, who should have been running his own household, was almost entirely dependent on his mother for advice and help, Jiroong on his wife. Others fall short of the Lepcha ideal personality by lack of intelligence or industry; among these were Katel, Dunbi, Ashyok, and Aga. Of these Dunbi was temperamentally lazy and the other three were foolish and incompetent by the standards of the culture. Tobgé, and to a lesser extent Dadool, exceeded the Lepcha bounds of irresponsibility and licentiousness permitted to young men.

Among the younger men Rigya, who was born in 1915, to a certain extent aided and abetted by his adoptive elder brother Nariya, was unique in being an active miser. He was always shabbily dressed, and unlike all the other Lepchas, never made us presents, though he spent a great deal of time hanging round us, gaping at our possessions, and asking for presents; he had particularly a magpie desire for illustrated papers, and was always asking for pictures of war 'because he had never seen anything like them and was amazed'. He was given quite a number of papers, but one day I told him he could not have any more because other people wanted them. (One of the very few times I saw a
[152] Lepcha boy cry was on one occasion when two mothers each accompanied with sons about eight years old came up for medicine; one of the boys asked for a paper and I gave it to him and went on dressing the cut; the mother of the other child asked rather timidly if I had not a paper for her boy as well, and I then saw this latter holding his mother's hand, with tears streaming down his face; he was crying hard but so quietly that I had not realised it though I was a couple of yards away.) A couple of days after I had refused to give Rigya any more papers he arrived early one morning to repeat his demand, bringing with him as a present the smallest

[4] See Appendix III, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 bottle of milk I ever received; he appeared astounded at his own
*159 generosity. I asked him whence he had got the milk, for I thought he had no cattle, and then, when I showed that I considered him one of the poorer people of Lingthem, his pride overcame his reticence, and he confided his great secret to me. I do not think that any Lepcha in Lingthem outside his household knew of his secret savings and ambitions. I naturally could not refer to them openly, but I made several hints when talking to other Lepchas; these hints were never taken up.

*159 Rigya was the middle son of Ashyok *youmi*, but was given as a child to Ashyok's elder brother, who had only one son, Nariya, ten years older than Rigya, and who seemed unlikely to have another. At that period Nariya's father was the richest man in Lingthem, whereas Ashyok, who had two other sons, was relatively poor. Since the death of Nariya's father, Rigya calls Nariya 'father'. This is the story he told me.

'When I was a baby I didn't distinguish between my adopting parents and my real parents; as soon as I knew who were my real parents I tried to run away to them; but they beat me and sent me back. I love my real parents best, especially my mother; they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them. But I loved my other mother and father too; they gave me food and rice and meat. Now I love my wife best after my parents, but I used not to.

'When I was a child I was very frightened of devils, especially Tongryong *moong*, who is like a tiger and runs after and kills people. I was also frightened of houses where people had died and of burial places and used to run away from them; indeed I did this till last year, but now I am grown up so I don't run away any longer. Even today I'm frightened of Jamfi *moong* and Mitoor (a dog-shaped devil) when I'm in the forests or high mountains. I'm frightened too of people if I've told them a lie, or said evil about them or done them wrong; but I've never done anything really wrong like sleeping with another man's wife. I've seen a lot of corpses but I've never been frightened of them.

'I didn't sleep with girls when I was young because my father and mother had told me it was very wrong to sleep with other men's wives; they promised me that they would *asék* me as soon as I was big enough. But one day when I was fifteen a girl from Lungdeung came to stop here and she said to me, "Let us sleep together", so I did and I liked it, and we did it again six or seven days later.

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T24 to monologue, to recount anecdotes, to illustrate a theme by their own past experiences. I soon noticed that Kurma had a particular tendency to do this, and also that he was flattered by my obvious interest in what he had to say. After we had been in fairly continuous contact for about a month I asked him to tell me what he remembered of his childhood. He did so willingly, and thereafter it was easy to bring him back to the subject of his own past life by asking a single leading question. 'What happened after you did so-and-so?' 'What happened to so-and-so?' While he was telling his story I asked practically no questions at all; I kept all queries for subsequent meetings when impersonal subjects would be discussed, when I would interject them without apparent emphasis. Altogether about six full days were passed mainly in the discussion of Kurma's own life; I should undoubtedly have had more material if he had not first been summoned to visit his parents-in-law and on his return been taken ill with fever. Besides these special sessions Kurma would often introduce apposite anecdotes of his own past life, both before and after I had started getting his story.

With Kurma, more than with any other individual in Lingthem we managed to set up a pattern of mutual obligations. As *gyapön* he had been charged by the Mandal to look after us, especially in the matter of getting provisions; he enjoyed the reflected importance of his contact with Europeans, and I flattered him by appealing to him somewhat more often than was necessary. He was anyhow more disposed to talk than to work and was very amenable to cajolery.

I did not like Kurma very much and had not very full confidence in him. I repeatedly tried to trip him up by asking him identical questions at considerable intervals of time, and to check up on him by questioning other people. Actually my distrust was practically unfounded; only on one major point—the death of Banyok—did I find him completely incorrect, and at a later date he voluntarily retracted his first version.

[157] Both through temperament and circumstances Kurma was an a-typical Lepcha. In temperament he had an unusual desire for power, was boastful, and had decided sadistic traits. Sociotically he was unfortunately circumstanced and his treatment of his circumstances was unusual. His mother appears to have been exceptionally poor and his adopting parents exceptionally unkind. Adoption is of itself statistically rare—only eleven people out of the 176 in

124 547

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features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly
as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is
hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely
sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a moun-
taineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities
which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so
strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west:
of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb,
and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this
statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way
true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather
broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands
and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently
Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard,
and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully
developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are
small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish
in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild,
frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain
sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the
absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of
direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders
them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are
supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without
the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and
unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided
equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or
grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming
up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

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437 They have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

● 157 "A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bare-headed and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

000 "What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particularly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

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"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have 157
had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink [733]
has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous 241
and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The 574
fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the 735
Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

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Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243 "dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields), millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177] introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans, one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of terraces for growing rice under water entails very considerable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157] indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat. Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556] wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243 this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157 however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling, although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my mind, that Nepali settlers would increase the yield of this extremely fertile land threefold; but they would do it to their own individual advantage. But if the Nepali, why not the Lepcha? The Lingtem people were always complaining that they could not afford an iron roof for the monastery. I should personally regret to see the present thatch removed; but that is for purely æsthetic reasons. A roof of corrugated iron would doubtless be more efficient, and if the people really want one, to say nothing of schools and other desiderata, it would be perfectly possible for them, by means of better agricultural methods, to raise the necessary funds. As at present constituted they have in their social structure all the makings of the perfect socialist state; but they have, of course, no leaders. What they require is a missionary; a non-religious missionary, that is; someone of the type that has obtained such remarkable results amongst the one-time ignorant peasants of Russia.

Jongu is now protected for the Lepchas and is to all intents and purposes an ethnological museum. Since it is a museum it may just as well be a good one; and the improvement of the people's condition, in which I would include sufficient education to free them from the thraldom of gods and demons, would form an unique opportunity for some educated Lepcha. There are many such in the Kalimpong district, where education has been long available; but removed from their natural environment Lepchas are forced to suppress their more altruistic characteristics in the general struggle for existence. In a district which cannot absorb even a fraction of its educated population this state of affairs is inevitable; at any rate until such time as manual work is no longer considered to be unsuited to the dignity of the so-called educated classes. In the meantime here is a chance for some public-spirited Lepcha; someone who still has some regard for the better qualities of the tribe to which he belongs. If the Jongu people remain as at present their total extinction as a separate tribe is only a matter of a few more generations. This, in view of their many admirable qualities,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A 112 group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet—rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists.* The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is 181 their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are 000 supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when

[441] * I have seldom been able to insert my own wrist (which is smaller than the average) into the wooden guard which the Lepcha wears on his left, as a protection against the bow-string: it is a curved ring of wood with an opening at one side, through which, by a little stretching, the wrist is inserted.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

128 reason valueless. It represents the ideal towards which the Lepchas strive and to which they attempt to mould their children, and it is in the deviations from this imposed stereotype that the greater number of psychological difficulties for the Lepchas arise. As such it has preponderating weight in the formation of individual character, and constitutes a point of reference from which deviation can be measured.

157 Deviations fall into two groups, negative and positive; people may lack some characteristic or qualification called for by the cultural x159 stereotype; or they may manifest characteristics and types of behaviour which exaggerate cultural characteristics, or they may have temperamental qualities definitely opposed to the cultural stereotype. Judged by such rigorous standards there is probably nobody who is not slightly deviant. There are, however, two people in Lingthem, Chala Mandal and Tafoor, in whom I could discern no temperamental cause for psychological discomfort. Both had reasons for a certain distress, but they were external ones; the Mandal was unhappy because he had no son, Tafoor, I think, slightly disappointed because he had neither the wealth nor position of his late father the Muktair. These two people practically embodied the Lepcha ideal, the Mandal for the layman and Tafoor for the lama; Tafoor's household also approached more nearly than any other to the Lepcha ideal.

[158] Owing to the Lepchas' great tolerance of—or rather indifference, to—shades of character, the maladjusted tend to be sociotic[1] rather than neurotic deviants. The only temperament type to which the Lepchas manifest constant opposition is the aggressive and domineering personality; the person who wishes to domineer or to command is constantly thwarted; to paraphrase Saki's epigram, there may be people born to command among the Lepchas, but they never find anybody born to obey them. The most outstanding of these aggressive characters were Tempa, who was described in Chapter Five,[2] and Kurma, whose story is given at length in the next chapter. It is worth noting that these two are also sociotically maladjusted; Tempa is a foreigner from outside Zongu, reared in a mixed community, and living under the slightly humiliating condition of resident son-in-law (*komok myok*); Kurma was adopted by an elderly couple as a little boy, was very unhappy

[1] This term was first used by Dr. Moreno to distinguish socially maladjusted from temperamentally maladjusted people.

[2] See pp. 124–126.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

x 159 732 'He would like to be wealthy and have lots of good food and clothes. He thinks he would like to go to live at Gangtok where he has been three or four or five times. (Numbers always confuse him; in any question demanding a numerical answer he always gives a number of alternatives—an exaggeration of a cultural trait.)

'The first time he wandered away he went to his uncle Songpo; he "thought he would be angry if he did not go and help them with their *work*." He still thinks that he has to go and help people or they will be angry.

'When he asked Chimpet if he had killed a bird he first of all denied having done so himself and then said that he had killed no big animal but has caught birds in snares. He showed little interest in this; did not care if the birds were caught alive or dead; apparently of no emotional importance.

'All through the interview—I reverted to the subject of his wanderings several times, but never stressed it—there came up the obsessive connection between wandering and helping others with their *work*. "I go away to help others clean the ground and sow and then it gets dark and I stay there. As long as I help others others will help me." His aversion to sex also came up several times. It is worth noting that Kanden exceptionally had no *oongop* to educate him sexually. It is possible that such a relation might have quieted his fear of women. Of course there are a number of women with whom he had a theoretical right to sleep, but none who were in a position to make a direct approach.'

x 159 732 158 I have given this interview at such length because it seems to me to raise a problem of particular interest. As far as I can tell from this interview with Kanden, from casual contacts with Asang's idiot son, and from the description of other wanderers given by Lepchas, there would appear to be considerable parallels between the Lepcha wanderers and the schizophrenics of our own culture. The parallels between 'wandering' and schizophrenia appear to me to be the following: the symptoms nearly always declare themselves in the second decade of life, after an apparently normal childhood; there are some physical abnormalities—the excess of body hair and a certain thickening of the features; there is the low or absent sexual impulse; there is the relative immobility and the very confidential voice. On the other hand what is for the Lepchas the most significant feature of all is the motiveless wandering, which has more obvious resemblance to a compulsion neurosis than to schizophrenia.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Also there do not seem to be any hallucinations (the hearing of devils cannot be so classified, as it is part of the expected behaviour of every child), nor, save during the wandering fits, any change of emotional attitude towards the members of the immediate family. 159x 732 158

It seems to me possible that the forms of insanity clinically recognised are culturally determined; and in that case the state of affairs which in Occidental societies would produce either schizophrenia or compulsion neurosis, among the Lepchas produces the various syndromes of which the wandering is the most obvious feature. In the case of Kanden it is noteworthy that the cultural stress on co-operation has produced what would appear to be a feeling of neurotic anxiety so strong that it interferes with the individual's proper performance of his own work. This suggestion of the cultural determination of the symptoms of insanity is inevitably completely tentative, since I know of no other records of definitely abnormal types in non-European cultures.

[p.378 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X 159 752 *Amputation of 'ingzong'.*

'At Lik I had an "*ingzong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

X 159 839 When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur [522] attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[158] [15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

1: Gorer
159

[For life histories of a number of Lep
pp. 217-220; 366-377; 384-413; 41

Lepcha AK5

as, see category 116,
429.]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 6

Some Lepcha Personalities

159 IT is time now to introduce some Lingtem personalities; and it will be convenient to start with the Church. The details of these brief biographies were not in every case contributed by the individual concerned; for, as with us, some Lepchas prefer to tell of others rather than to talk about themselves. I always felt apologetic when asking for these personal details. How many of us, I wonder, would care to impart the more intimate details of our private lives to a stranger, and one of an alien culture at that? In actual fact, however, most Lepchas have no reticence about such matters, and are not in the least offended if one refers to their illegitimate children, or asks for the names of the women with whom they are on intimate terms.

* * * * *

The senior Dorje-Lopön of Lingtem was a man of almost saintly appearance. Ascetic-looking and upright, you would have said that here was one who had long since cast off the cares of the flesh, but actually he could have given points to Casanova. When we first met him he was well over eighty years of age, but still spent most of the day helping in the fields. He first married when he was quite a young man, but tiring of his wife, by whom he had one son, he transferred his affections to a girl he liked better. He found the new wife so much to his liking, that, leaving his son in the care of the first, he forsook her and ran off to Darjeeling with the second. He came back one year later, and on his return his first wife's relatives attempted to bring about a reconciliation. This,
159 however, was unsuccessful, since the Dorje-Lopön had
586 completely tired of his first wife. All efforts having failed, she

: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
[785] days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
[793] complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok,
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The second Dorje Lopön.

The senior Dorje Lopön.

[facing p. 84]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Tafoor.

Chötembu.

[facing p. 85]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head.
[582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction.
[595] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in
[587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill.
[861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [364]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play 857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Umzet. - Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

● 159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

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Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159 his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582] his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years, when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464] Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [291] was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862] not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told me they were very anxious while he was away from home and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861] beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him. Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191] Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464] just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last [483] eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159 for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584 too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi came home the following year he at once made it clear that he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159 585 thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 588

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159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

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The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[104] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159 teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754 thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776] Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682 within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673] own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753] spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery: hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage, and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776] people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was believed that she always carried the poison on her person, and for this reason he followed her to the fields and completely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old woman should be so maligned.

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While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

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159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire, and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

● 159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

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●159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep.
159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled
763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159
a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763
had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159
house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764
now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159
even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848]
was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

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the ground shredding a bamboo. He playfully kicked the 159
ball of twine which his father had just been making. This 861
made him very angry and he threw his knife at him; the scar of this he has to this day. He never loved his adopting parents. They used to beat him a lot on the back, and this always made him belch. Whenever he stole they tied his hands together with brushwood and held them over the fire. Although this never injured them it frightened him very much, and he decided to give up stealing.

Karma was now very unhappy. Although his adopting 159
parents were rich they gave him only a second-hand knife and some old and worn-out clothes. His mother, who was still very poor, had married again, and from time to time he used to go and see her. Whenever he did this he used always to take a little food, which he had saved out of the little that was given him. When he was about sixteen he decided to return to his own home. His mother asked him why he had come and told him to go back; but his stepfather remained silent. At that time Karma's two brothers and his eldest sister, who was already married, were living at home with their mother. While he was still feeling rather unsettled his elder brother said to him: "Why not stay at home and let us work the fields together; after all are we not real brothers?" Karma was fond of his elder brother, but did not care very much for his mother; but he decided to stay and help them work in the fields. After he had been at home about a month two men came from his adopting father's village. He was husking rice at the time. The two men came straight up to him and told him he must return with them; but this he refused to do. They then told him that his adopting father had bought a grindstone in a nearby village and that he wanted him to carry it home. A few days later he and his brother did take the grindstone over; but in order not to be seen they left it in an out-house and stole quietly away. Some weeks after this Karma's adopting father, whose name was Pashu, himself arrived. He had come over to attend a ceremony which the second Dorje-Lopön was performing

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● 159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopōn was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding [593] life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

[837] After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's [762] elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re- [582] sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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replied that since the woman had herself come and implored 159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible.
A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to
give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to
be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies.
When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a
load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain.
These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he
said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more
than this he would not say. The same evening, when they 159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother 762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some
minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about
being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly
raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into
the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and
then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself
with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand
and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near.
His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand
and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him
to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried
to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his
tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly
clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He
shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some
wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [757]
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together
and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this
time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a
few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell 159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a
man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time,
but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since 159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

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159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is
531 the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an
531 artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at
159 Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of
874 its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he
465 took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chôtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
273]
415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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●159

Chala Mandal, the Head-man of Lingtem.

[441
622]

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
874 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

531 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
874 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery
792 has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's
622 leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about
775 the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun,
[766] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort,
622 and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This I did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared into the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

* * * * *

602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show, by means of charts, the connection between the various people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either by blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general account such as this, however, these details would not make for easy reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them for publication in some appropriate scientific journal.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

co-operation; and also Rai Sahib, Tashi Dadul, the Private Secretary to His Highness, Rai Sahib, Sonam Dadul, Rhennock Kazi and official Steward in charge of Palace affairs; the Honourable Mary Scott, D.D., of Gangtok, and the Very Reverend Dr. J. A. Graham, C.I.E., D.D., of Kalimpong, all of whom gave me much help and advice. My thanks are also due to Sukra Singh for his unfailing patience and good temper in situations which would have disconcerted many more sophisticated people.

I have attempted within a single volume to give an adequate description of Lepcha society and in particular of the village of Lingthem; to avoid undue length I have had to suppress a considerable amount of minor detail, but I hope that I have done this without obscuring or falsifying any facts. The religions I have in particular dealt with very summarily, for a full treatment would require a second volume comparable in size to this one, and would heavily overweight the picture I am trying to present. The volume is divided into three books, each of which represents to some extent a different method of description; in Book One I have presented the material and formalised aspects of Lepcha society, in Book Two the mainly unformalised aspects of Lepcha life, and in Book Three the history of certain individuals. I have tried to make a total picture by presenting three view-points: the frame-work of the society, the impact of the culture on the people, and the individuals who are the product of that culture and society. I have employed, to the best of my ability, the various disciplines, anthropological and psychological, functional and Freudian, which seemed apposite to the aim I had in mind; I have used them eclectically, for most of the disciplines seem to me useful and none of them completely adequate alone. My methods of working and my attitude to various aspects of anthropology are described in appropriate places in the text, particularly in Chapters Ten and Seventeen. In Chapter Seventeen I have attempted to answer some of the problems raised by my study of the Lepchas.

It has seemed to me that many sociological works appear to neglect the individuals who compose the societies they are describing; in so far as I claim any novelty in the treatment of the subject-matter of this book, it is in the fact that I have let the Lepchas speak for themselves, that I have tried not to forget that the village of Lingthem is inhabited by one hundred and seventy-six persons, and the reserve of Zongu by about two thousand. I have tried to illustrate every statement from the lives of the people of

128 [161]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered Lepchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in Sikkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were employed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropologists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere else as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has apparently been found between the Lepcha language and some dialect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the people of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of their own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans at some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. 'Lepcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though the philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the Russian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since all books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, it would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word would appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present Darjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before the beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable 648
infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference 161
of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book 361
would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not 657
made the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only 184
had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with [28] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either [36] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and [16] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the 527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 197] few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 797 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE 'LEPCHAS' OR 'RONGS' AND THEIR SONGS

BY

L. A. WADDELL, LL.D.

114 The 'Lepchas' or 'Rongs', are the wild Mongoloid aborigenes of Sikhim, a mountainous tract, about 8000 square miles in extent, in the south-eastern Himalayas, which is wedged in between Nepal on the west, Bhotan on the east, Tibet on the north, and the plains of Bengal on the south. These people are particularly interesting, as they are amongst the least civilized of all the Himalayan tribes [1]. They have preserved intact their tribal language and many of their primitive savage customs, on account of the peculiarly isolated position of their rugged country — shut in as it is by high wall-like ridges from Nepal and Bhotan, by the everlasting snows from Tibet, and by the deadly belt of *Tarai* jungle from the Indian plains. But they are now, however, fast dying out [2], and losing their identity by intermarriage with the swarms of more civilized Nepalese and Tibetans who have lately swept into their country, and especially so since it has been opened up under British rule; but neither their language or customs have yet been fully recorded, nor have their ethnological affinities been clearly ascertained.

Having lived amongst these people for several years in Darjiling and in their forest homes, I here attempt to rescue from oblivion some of their songs — a subject on which nothing has hitherto been published. This I do at the request of Professor A. GRÜNWEDEL, who has already in the T'oung-Pao [3] published a small dictionary of their speech, which he compiled from some missionary tracts, and the Lepcha Grammar of the late Mr. MAINWARING [4]; and he is at present editing Mr. MAINWARING's large manuscript: Lepcha-English Dictionary. My anthropometric and ethnographic materials bearing on the racial affinities of this tribe are too bulky to be included in the present paper. Here it may be sufficient to mention that the results of my observations are in many ways

[161]

1) Except those in the extreme east, in Assam.

2) The pure Lepchas now (1898) number only a few thousands, and their language is likely to become extinct in two or three generations.

3) In 1892. Also a short Lepcha text in 1896, 526—60, and another in Bastian's Festschrift, Berlin 1896.

4) Grammar of the Rong or Lepcha. Calcutta 1876.

[p. 41]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [152]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [161]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX I

(a) VITAL STATISTICS OF LINGTHEM

621 162 IN Lingthem it was—very exceptionally for a primitive community—possible to get the exact age of every member of the community. This was possible because it is essential for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year cycle they were born in for future horoscopes and divinations. They know also how many cycles they have completed because, after the completion of the third or fourth cycle—that is to say after the age of thirty-six or forty-eight—it is necessary to make a prophetic consultation with the lamas at the beginning of each new cycle—i.e. at the age of forty-eight, sixty, seventy-two, etc.—and all remember how many consultations they have made. Only in the case of two old widowed women am I in any doubt as to the accuracy of the data. This census was taken in April 1937.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION BY SEX IN TEN-YEAR GROUPS

Age	*Males*	*Females*
90–81	3	1
80–71	3	4
70–61	5	5
60–51	10	6
50–41	13	13
40–31	8	11
30–21	19	16
20–11	18	11
10– 1	10	20

TOTAL POPULATION	176
MALES	89
FEMALES	87

Median age for the population	28—year 1909
Median age for males	29—year 1908
Median age for females	28—year 1909

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

TABLE I

621

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

162

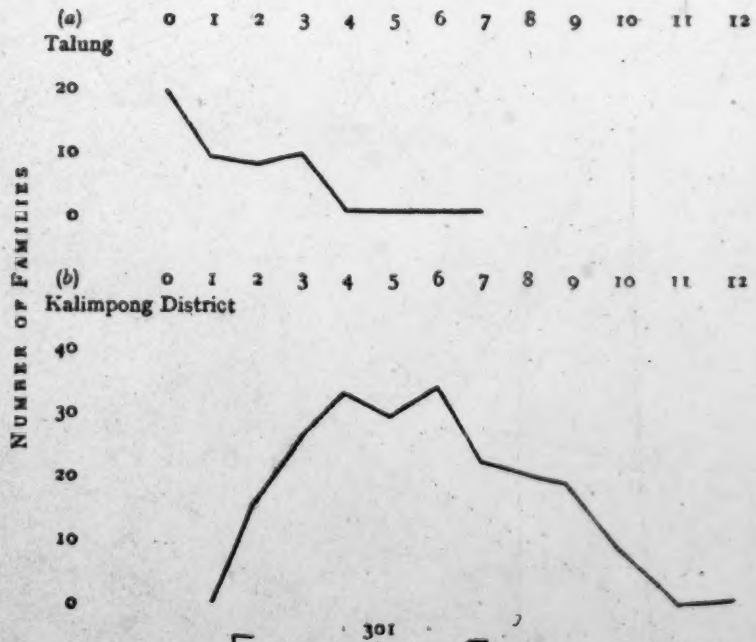
Year of birth	Males	Females	Year of birth	Males	Females
1847	1	–	1892	–	1
1848	–	–	1893	2	1
1849	–	–	1894	–	1
1850	–	–	1895	–	–
1851	–	–	1896	3	3
1852	1	1	1897	–	1
1853	–	–	1898	–	–
1854	–	–	1899	–	2
1855	1	–	1900	3	2
1856	–	–	1901	1	1
1857	1	–	1902	2	1
1858	–	1	1903	–	–
1859	–	–	1904	–	–
1860	1	–	1905	–	1
1861	–	–	1906	2	3
1862	–	–	1907	1	–
1863	–	1	1908	5	1
1864	–	1	1909	–	5
1865	–	–	1910	4	–
1866	1	1	1911	–	3
1867	–	–	1912	3	4
1868	1	–	1913	–	–
1869	–	–	1914	5	2
1870	1	1	1915	1	1
1871	1	1	1916	–	–
1872	–	–	1917	1	–
1873	–	1	1918	1	1
1874	1	–	1919	4	1
1875	1	2	1920	1	1
1876	–	–	1921	2	1
1877	1	2	1922	2	2
1878	3	–	1923	2	1
1879	–	–	1924	1	–
1880	1	–	1925	1	2
1881	1	1	1926	3	2
1882	1	–	1927	1	–
1883	–	1	1928	2	2
1884	1	1	1929	–	–
1885	1	1	1930	–	6
1886	1	–	1931	–	–
1887	1	1	1932	–	–
1888	3	1	1933	2	5
1889	1	1	1934	4	2
1890	2	1	1935	1	4
1891	1	3	1936	–	1

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX I

162 184 THE charts below show the relative sizes of Lepcha families in (*a*) The Talung Valley, and (*b*) the Kalimpong District of British India. The figures for Kalimpong were very kindly supplied by the Rev. W. M. Scott, Church of Scotland Guild Mission. Figures of childless marriages in this district are unfortunately not available; but Mr. Scott informs me that such a state is rare. I have confined the details of the Talung to families which I believe to be completed. This distinction has not been made in the Kalimpong figures; but for comparative purposes it makes little difference.

Number of children in family.



[p. 302 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

164 Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas 842 call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained 731 dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

842 Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

● 163 Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of 165 those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number

291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
● [164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
[751] the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there. Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
● [164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776] the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751] does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of [164] dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

 L N

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such 342
ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up [164]
every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition
sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which
does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a
wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is
raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house,
on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor
of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and
cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. L 356
It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we 476
arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a
number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters.
Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother;
but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. L
No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being [165]
fed while they are working they are given a feast on the
conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once L [356]
started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which 521
seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone 831
appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); [273]
but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief 522
topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere
near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene
remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest
joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof,
so that men working below could pass personal remarks on
such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say,
however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time
Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the
workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here
and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted.
This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[684] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the
462 father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
[567] and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

● 164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres [164 787] are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits 772] of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

164 Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas 842 call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained 731 dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

842 Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

163 Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-
● 165 seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1
Sikkim AK3

L 177

Although they have not been influenced by Europeans the Lepchas have been very greatly influenced and their ways of life much modified by the contact and pressure of their more highly developed neighbours, the Sikkimese, the Nepali, and above all the Tibetans. The extent of this modification is almost incalculable, owing to the fact that there is no precise information available about these neighbouring societies. Tibet is, I suppose, the most written-about country in the world, but none of the literature that I know of is sufficiently detailed to allow comparisons between the Lepchas and any equivalent Tibetan group. Although there are many books on lamaism I have found none which describes the Lhatsun-pa subsect of the Nyingma-pa sect—the variation followed in Lingthem monastery—so that it is impossible to state definitely whether the Lepchas have ignored or considerably modified any aspect or aspects of the religion to which they have been converted. It is as though an investigator were trying to find out about Baptists and could only get information about Christianity in general, with some of the more obvious distinctions between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism noted.

N S [113 114]

With regard to the Sikkimese and non-Gurkha Nepali the situation is in some respects simpler; there is practically no information of any sort available about them. The *Gazeteer of Sikkim* published over forty years ago, contains some generalised statements about the habits of the Sikkimese; and the writings[9] and conversation of Major C. J. Morris who had studied the Gurkha soldiers under his command have given me information on certain points. Despite this slight help it is impossible in nearly every instance to state with any sort of certainty whether a given custom, belief or story is confined to the Lepchas, is shared by them with some other tribe, or has been relatively recently introduced from without. On the whole the only available source of information has been Lepcha tradition. Until other tribes in the same area have been studied (and the fact that Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet are practically closed to Europeans makes such studies in the near future problematical) precise questions of culture contact must remain unanswered.

L 171

L 142

The Lepchas are a mongoloid people, with, it would seem, slightly more pronounced Mongolian features, fairer complexions and greater stature than their present neighbours. Many of the children have carroty or auburn hair, but the hair of adults is always

[9] *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Gurkhas.* By Major C. J. Morris. Delhi 1937.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that [171] there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. [857] Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

539 passed the spot was safe: he would be eaten up at once. The monster was never satisfied, and was causing trouble all over the place. Because of this the gods decided to send down Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was to remain and control it. Immediately on reaching the earth this god assumed a form identical with the *tanen*, only very much bigger. It had no difficulty in swallowing the *tanen* whole, which it did as soon as the two met. From inside the god's stomach the *tanen* started to grumble at the harsh treatment meted out to it; and so Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was really a compassionate being, at once excreted it on to the ground. As soon as it came to itself again Phapay addressed it thus: "You have eaten up all the people of this neighbourhood, and have done a great deal of damage of every kind. If, in future, you do not obey me implicitly I shall eat you again; and the next time I do so you will remain inside my stomach. If, however, you do as you are told I will give you the control of thirty devils. In order to do this, however, you must remain for ever on the earth."

The *tanen* agreed to do what was asked of it and has remained in the world ever since. That is why, when any of the thirty devils concerned is troubling a person, it is necessary to offer a Go-sum.

* * * * *

539 171 With very few alterations this story could be made to read like a tract; but I should be surprised to find that a missionary took any part in its invention! Its real interest, however, lies in the fact that it incorporates most of the known historical details concerning the construction of the famous Bodhnath stupa in Nepal. I was unaware of this at the time, and only came across the connection on my return from Sikkim, when I was reading through Waddell. It is of considerable psychological interest to note the difference between the oral Lepcha version of the story and that given in the printed booklet which is sold to pilgrims at the stupa; and for this reason I give below Waddell's translation in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

full. It seems to have been purged of all its coarser details; or were they added by the Lepchas? I think this is not unlikely; and that they have also incorporated the story of the Go-sum, which receives no mention in the printed version.

* * * * *

"This stupa enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the Buddhas of three times (i.e., the present, past and future), and of all the Bodhisats, and it holds the Dharmakaya.

"When king Thi-Sron Detsan asked the Guru, at Samyas, to tell him the history of the *Ma-gu-ta* stupa in Nepal, made by the four sons of 'the bestower of gifts,' named 'the poor mother Pya-rdsi-ma (fowl-keeper),' then the Guru thus related (the story):—

"In a former Kalpa—time beyond conception—the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, approached the Tathagatha Akitabha and prayed for the animals immersed in the miry slough, and after saving these he went to mount Potala. There he saw hosts of unsaved animals, innumerable like unto mounds of *murwa* lees, and (seeing this) he wept. Two of his pitying tears were born into Indra's heaven as god's daughters, named respectively Kan-ma and the little Kan-ma or Kan-chun-ma. This latter having stolen in heaven some flowers, was as a punishment reborn in earth, in a low pigherd's family in Maguta in Nepal, under the name of Samvara or 'the Chief Happiness,' her mother's name being Purna. On marriage she had four sons, and her husband's early death left her with the sole care of the family. She with her family undertook the herding and rearing of geese for the wealthy, and having in this pursuit amassed much wealth, the Ma-pya-rdsi-ma (or mother fowl-keeper) decided to build a large stupa in honour of the Tathagatha. She, thereon, went to the king and begged for a site, saying she wanted only so much ground as one hide could cover. The king assented, saying '*Ja-rum*,' which literally means 'do' + 'can,' i.e. 'you can do (so).' Then she, cutting a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

539 hide into thin thongs (forming a long rope), enclosed that
● 171 very large space which now is occupied by this chaitya. And she, with her four sons, and a servant, and an elephant and an ass, as beasts of burden, brought earth and stones, and commenced to build this chaitya by their own personal labour.

"Then the king's ministers appealed to the king to stop such an ambitious building, as they asserted its magnificence put to shame the religious buildings of the king and the nobles. But the king answered '*Ka-Sor*'—which literally means 'mouth + (has) spoken'—and so refused to interfere. (Thus is the name of the stupa—'*Ja-run K'a-sor*'—accounted for.)

"After four years, when only the base had been laid, the mother died, but her four sons continued the building till its completion. And in the receptacle was placed one Magadha measure (drona) of the relics of the Tathagatha Kasyapa. This event was celebrated by the manifestation in the sky, above the stupa, of Kasyapa himself, and the circles of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisats, and their hosts of retinue, and amongst showers of flowers the gods contributed divine music and rained perfume. Earthquakes thrice occurred, and through the glory of the assembled divinities there was no darkness for five nights.

"One of the sons then prayed, 'May I in my next re-birth be born as a great scholar (to benefit mankind),' and he was born as Thumni Sambhota (the introducer of the so-called 'Tibetan' character, and the first translator of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan, *circa* A.D. 650.

"The second son prayed in a similar manner, and was reborn as 'The Bodhisattva' (the abbot of the first monastery of Tibet).

"Then the elephant or *lan-po* (hearing these prayers) said, 'These two, neglecting me who contributed so much assistance, are asking all the good things for themselves, therefore let me be re-born in a form to destroy them or their work.' And he was afterwards re-born as Lan-darma (the persecutor of Lamaism).

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet

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and have found no reference to it in any of the books on that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

Here is an example of treatment of a different kind. Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however, who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

"The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,
					1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

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"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805
combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [17]
a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 751
Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755
compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

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[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

● 171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

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the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

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825 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus
171 it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

* * * * *

796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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when constructing the thread-crosses,
strict rules concerning their colour, the way of arranging and knotting the coloured strings, etc. must be observed according to orthodox traditions. While the work is progressing, prayers and magic syllables (*dhāranis*) are chanted and the officiating priest breathes from time to time upon the structure.

Besides the sticks, coloured thread and tufts of wool, used for the construction of thread-crosses, several other objects are often required in these ceremonies. They are: various skulls of animals—thus at the ceremony of "closing the door of the sky demons" the *mDos* is fastened to a dog's skull, while in the rite "closing the door against the earth demons" a ram's skull is used instead—furthermore flat wooden sticks, covered with rough drawings of various emblems and images. These sticks, which are called Tamshing (*Khram shing*)[10] by the Tibetans, were originally used by Bŏn priests as important objects in their ceremonies. Other related instruments are sticks with tufts of white or coloured wool on top and in the middle, called Yetag (*Yas btags*), cones made of dough—termed Torma,[11] *gTor ma*—and images made of butter with the help of wooden moulds (*Zan par*). When preparing a base for the *mDos*, earth, straw and grass are used to build a series of square platforms, usually four in number, superimposed one on top of the other in decreasing size. On top of this the principal thread-cross is usually planted. This arrangement and some of the ideas connected with the various parts of the *mDos* itself show a certain parallel to the ideas connected with the symbolism of the Buddhist Chŏtens[12] (*mChhod rten*, Skr. Stūpa).

So far little authentic information on the original use of the *mDos* has been obtained from Tibetan sources; additional evidence on this subject can be, however, obtained from some neighbours of the Tibetans. It is well known to-day, that many of the neighbouring tribes, especially in the south and south-east professed or even still profess a religion, which seems to be very similar to the Tibetan Bŏn faith. The most comprehensive evidence on this question

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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is to be found in the religious beliefs and customs of the ¹Na—²khi tribe, who have been previously confused with the Mo-so. The ¹Na—²khi, a branch of the ancient Ch'iang live to-day in Southwest China around Likiang, their former capital. This tribe was carefully studied by Dr. J. F. Rock over a period of more than twenty years. Dr. Rock translated the greatest part of the comprehensive literature of the ¹Na—²khi and analyzed their religious ceremonies; thereby he showed that this tribe preserved in its beliefs and customs a very high percentage of old Bön traditions. The priests of the ¹Na—²khi, called ²Dto—¹mba, employ thread-crosses (¹*Na-²k' wai* in ¹Na-²khi) in a number of ceremonies. As in Tibet, these ¹*Na-²k'wai* are regarded as "seats" for either gods or demons. But we also find other beliefs. Thus it is reported in ¹Na-²khi books, that ²Dto-¹mba ²Shi-²lo (who is identical with the Tibetan *gShen rabs mi bo*, the founder of the Bön religion), was transformed at the moment of his death into a thread-cross, while on the so-called *Ha"-shi-pi*, which is used at funeral ceremonies, ²Dto-¹mba ²Shi-¹lo's horse is figured carrying a ¹*Na-²k'-wai*.[14] Another belief is that the ²Ba"¹d'a, the warriors who accompany some of the ¹Na-²khi deities, originated from thread-crosses in the intermediary space between heaven and earth.[15] We should finally notice that drawings of ¹*Na-²k'-wai* are often found in the pictographic script of the ¹Na-²khi.

To Dr. Rock we are also indebted for the information that thread-crosses are used by the ancient Hapa sect, members of which are still living in the territory of Muli (*Mi li*) and Yung-ning in Southwest China. The Hapa erect elaborate thread-crosses for averting hail.[16] These structures, called *Nyata* by the Hapa sorcerers, are renewed after three or four years. As Dr. Rock obtained a Hapa manuscript,[17] written in Tibetan and dealing with the ceremony of erecting a thread-cross for the demon-king Pe-dkar we can expect to receive valuable information on this subject later on.

Unfortunately, less is known about the use of thread-crosses among other near or more distant neighbours of the

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ôngge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18]

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bŏn, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now.

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace".

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there

crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*" and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*. This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form, as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction. The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bŏn religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and especially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*. 796 778 171

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bón terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bón priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28] 796 171

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bón flowers" is mentioned in Bón scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bón origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

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At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called 778 776

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
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796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned
776 before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
177 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
778 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that
778 besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
● 171 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a
778 tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube*, *Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

755 a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

755 171 The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The 825 Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned. In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud*- demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 776 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

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[1] [see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive descrip-
171 tion of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40]
we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of
the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon
its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about
the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite
also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is
regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough,
778 coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with
pong sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed
into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger
image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure
of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's
bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols
of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron,
tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various
crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows
and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in
[776 *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders
seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the
171] *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these super-
natural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red
thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of
the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[764]
796 If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
776 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
778 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
[see cat. 116, p. 78, - Analyse]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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described,[12] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancieut Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv für Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

DAS S. CH. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

SCHLAGINTWEIT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet*, *Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora siberia*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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of India proper; all the Himalayan tribes of Sikkim being markedly Mongolian in origin. It does not, however, follow that they are all of Tibetan extraction; perhaps, indeed, none but the Moormis are so. The Mechi of the Terai is decidedly Indo-Chinese, and of the same stock as the savage races of Assam, the north-east and east frontier of Bengal, Arracan, Burmah, &c. Both Lepchas and [71] Limboos had, before the introduction of Lama Boodhism from Tibet, many features in common with the natives of Arracan, especially in their creed, sacrifices, faith in omens, worship of many spirits, absence of idols, and of the doctrine of metempsychosis. Some of their customs, too, are the same; the form of their houses and of some of their implements, their striped garments, their constant and dexterous use of the bamboo for all utensils, their practice of night-attacks in war, of using poisoned arrows only in the chase, and that of planting "crow-feet" of sharp bamboo stakes along the paths an enemy is expected to follow. Such are but a few out of many points of resemblance, most of which struck me when reading Lieutenant Phayre's account of Arracan,* and when travelling in the districts of Khasia and Cachar.

The laws affecting the distribution of plants, and the lower animals, materially influence the migrations of man also; and as the botany, zoology, and climate of the Malayan and Siamese peninsula advance far westwards into India, along the foot of the Himalaya, so do also the varieties of the human race. These features are most conspicuously displayed in the natives of Assam, on both sides of the Burrampooter, as far as the great bend of that river, beyond which they gradually disappear; and none of the

country by the Indo-Germanic conquerors, who are now represented by the Hindoos.

* "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal."

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nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling), nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa). All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [754]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[87] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

87. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 394 a.b.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[176] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[181] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[154] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tachangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear. 136 [231 833]

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu. 136 171

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[67] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[68]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

67. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 132 sq.
68. E. C. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. E. Livesey, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 199 sq., W. S. Thom, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 106 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 222, seq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 134 sq.

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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bönmän-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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796 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-
782 faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of
[241 Mayal ; the others come from different supernaturals, barley,
776] wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity ; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share
[844] this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse
[786 between the sexes ; however, the comprehensive ban on in-
[833] cestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom
171] which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or
[262] a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must
[315] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796 estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [171] Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796 to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782 his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773 ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 160 sq.

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796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[178] the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 356.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 175.

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Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

278 A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyö, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

273 171 The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 62, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.
82. X, 34. 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

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potent that it even brought about immortality.[84] The motif of "Medicine of Immortality" which is widely circulated through the whole of Asia is an effective argument in this case. According to this, Soma was a kind of medicinal plant which grew in the highest mountains. 273 171

In those early days, no Indo-Aryans lived in this mountain world. It is more probable that from the very early time they obtained medicinal roots and herbs from the inhabitants of the mountains. In the Atharvaveda it is said, "The young maid of the Kirati race, a young damsel, digs the drug ; digs it with shovels wrought of gold on the high ridges of the hills."[85] The Kirati however are a people related to the Tibetans, as we shall see later on, and their name is identical with the Rai as we have mentioned above. The expression "kirata-tikta" occurs in Sanskrit and means "A very bitter medicinal plant." The name is preserved in the Prakrit as Cilaa-itta or Ciraa-itta ; in Old-Bengal as Cirayita and in New-Bengal as Cirata or Cireta. It certainly means "Medicine of the Kirata."[86] The Soma plant and its juice were equally bitter. It is reported that the Kirati provided the Aryans with Soma plants. If they grew in the high Himalayan mountains there was certainly no other way of obtaining the plants except through the natives who had a knowledge of medicinal herbs.

It is naturally impossible to produce a commonly used popular drink from a rare plant which had to be transported from a great distance. Oldenberg raises the same question from an altogether different point of view, "Has Soma ever been a favourite drink in the daily life of the Aryans ? I doubt it...In the Veda, Soma certainly was not a favourite drink, and it seems to me that the Avestic sources also teach this. The real intoxicating drink in the ordinary life of the ancient Indian peoples was sura...

Sura was put to sacred use at the ceremonies of the Sautramani as also of the Vajaya."[87] Even the Soma sacrifices were not numerous, or greater quantities of Soma plants would

84. op. cit. I, 91, 6 ; VIII, 48, 3 ; IX, 113, 8.
85. S. K. Chatterji, Kirata-Jana-Krti, Journal R. A. S. B. Vol. XVI, 1950. No. 2. p. 163.
86. op. cit. p. 163.
87. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 366.

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273 have been used. "Only for a few, the celebrations of the
71 Soma sacrifice could have been possible; where it was celebrated it could only have had for the masses of the people at most, the character of an incomprehensible play which they watched; the functions leaving the onlookers unmoved."[88] A drink so easily obtained and in general use, would not have so easily been linked with the "Drink of Immortality."

The Soma plants were ground down according to primitive methods on a stone plate by means of a stone, and later crushed in a stone mortar.[89] Then the juice was squeezed out. This juice was of a brownish, reddish, or greeny-yellowish colour. To purify this juice it was run through a strainer made of sheep's wool.[90] The Iranians used a strainer made of hair from the holy white bull. During the process three priests chant a monotonous hymn. The juice was very frequently mixed with water, milk or sour milk.[91]

It was poured back and forth into different barrels. All the manipulations would certainly cause the fermentation of the juice, as it did have an intoxicating effect.[92]

All this goes to show that Soma was quite a rare intoxicating drink. The ordinary intoxicant of the ancient Indians was Sura, which was also used for the purpose of the sacrifice. Here, too, we have an exact parallel with the Lepchas;—millet beer, Chi, is the ordinary stimulant which is generally used for the sacrificial purpose as it is easily obtained. Dyö is made from medicinal roots and is of a brownish colour. The alcohol content is high like some of our modern liqueurs. Because of the rarity of the roots, Dyö is not often manufactured and is less frequently used in sacrifices. Soma must have been extracted from some similar medicinal root. The Himalayan peoples gave it to the Aryans and handed over to them the recipe for making it.

This of course does not prove that the sacrifice of the intoxicating drink was introduced by the Aryans in this manner.

88. op. cit. p. 449 sq.
89. Rigveda IX, 67, 19, 107, 10; I, 28, 1-3.
90. Rigveda IX. 69. 9.
91. Rigveda VII. 3, 6.
92. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 457 sq., S. K. Godivala, Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1925, p. 5. sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance.

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple.

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 169.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 and cut it to pieces. Then he cleared the path for the waters
771 so that they could flow freely into the sea.[96]

Indra-Vrtra corresponds to the Iranian Tishtar-Apaosha. After the fight between them both had raged with unabated fury for three days, he appeared weary and about to give in. Whereupon he cried, "If men would perform sacrifices, I still could win." They therefore offered the Haoma sacrifice because of which the hero gained strength and conquered the demon. Indra had also obtained superb strength through the drinking of Soma. In the Rong myths the stimulant Chi had to be offered to God in order that he might be passified and let the floods abate. As the serpent is again linked in another way with the flood, the snake king as leader of the river Rung-nyo and the subsequent flood;—we do not believe that the Rong have, in this case, taken over Vedic Hindu myths, but have handed down, independently, their own legends, which are very slightly influenced by modern Hinduism.

The second motif is the saving of a pair or of a few people, who either saved themselves by taking refuge on a mountain-top or in a vessel. We have acquainted ourselves earlier with the Rong legend (page 40 sq.). In Atharvaveda (19·39·8) this event is recorded as having occurred in the Himalayas, "There was the arrival of the vessel ; there was the peak of the Himalayas ; there was immortality in sight ; there grows the Kushta grass." Shatapatha Brahmana (1·8·1/10) describes how Manu was saved in a ship. According to the Vendidad of the Iranians, Jamshed (Yima) was locked up in a "vara" by Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme God, in order that he might be saved from the great flood.

As the myths of the flood occur among so many Asiatic peoples (in the Near, Middle and Far East) there is no conclusive parallel about the saving of mankind as described in the myths of the Rong and Indo-Iranians. These legends could be drawn from several sources.

782 In the cult of the Rong, the sacrificing of bulls plays an outstanding part. For both, the living (during illness) and for the dead (in funeral ceremonies), the bulls must lose their

96. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 133 sq.

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

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796 Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow.
782 These sacrifices are common among the different Naga
171 tribes.[101] Lepchas, who during the war came to these parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tedencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11·1·8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse ; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god,
[776] Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. C. R. Stoner, The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1950, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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 796 782 171 [776]

Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[103] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult.

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796 Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782 The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171 the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793 such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

103. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaiischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

Anthropos. Volume 48 (1953)

/889/ The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower

By René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

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114 Part of the legendary material of the peoples living in the maharajah state of Sikkim at the foot of the Central Himalayas has already been treated by various people, and also a number of traditions of the Lepchas—the largest group of the original inhabitants of this territory—have been mentioned in numerous publications. (1)

1. Cf. Kali Kumar Das, "The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell," Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) Volume VI (1896). —C. de Beauvoir-Stocks, "Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikhim," Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21 (1925). — G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London, 1938). — J. Morris, Living with Lepchas (London, 1938).

114 Singularly enough, however, one of the legends best known among
TB the Lepchas has not received—with the exception of two brief references—closer treatment in any of the pertinent works that have appeared to date: this is a tradition that tells of the unsuccessful project of the Lepcha people to construct a tower of clay pots reaching the vault of heaven.

172 One of the reasons for the survival of this legend is the circum-
114 stance that at the supposed site of the tower potsherds have been dug

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a
●172 specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

/Lepcha text follows./ (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

113 539 dwelling place; this marriage produced four sons and three daughters, who, however, were apparently absorbed in the families of the neighboring Limbu. Thus the tribe of Na ong was finally completely extinguished.

113 The place where, according to the legend, the construction of the tower was undertaken is a plateau about two kilometers square situated in the western part of Sikkim, near the Indian-Nepalese border. To the west it is screened by a chain of mountains; to the south and the northeast it is bounded by two rivers. In the deeply fissured landscape of the Himalayan foothills a level plain of such proportions is a great rarity, and hence the plateau is clearly visible from a distance. It was subsequently transformed almost completely into a rice field, and only its extreme eastern corner, which bears the name Phugamdin and where — according to the legend —the first settlement of the Na ong arose, is uncultivated and today serves as a burial place for the Limbus, who recently settled in this part of Sikkim. (8)

8. A scholarly work on the burial methods of the Limbus — as well as an exhaustive investigation of this tribe — has unfortunately not yet been written. According to reports available up to now, the Limbu dead are generally buried, but sometimes cremated. Without doubt, however, the potsherds discovered in Daramdin cannot be grave-goods of the Limbus, for the Lepchas, who are sufficiently aware of the customs of this neighboring tribe — would in this case have ascribed no special significance to such findings.

●172 While people are farming on the plateau — especially during the spring plowing — potsherds are constantly discovered; understandably enough, these findings are connected by the local inhabitants to the legend of the tower. Despite repeated questioning I still have not yet succeeded in obtaining some of the findings for closer examination; apparently the unearthed fragments are heedlessly thrown away by the populace.

/895/ The conditions which prevail at present in the Tibetan-Indian border region make it impossible, for the time being, to undertake any extensive investigation on the spot, and particularly any systematic excavations. I must therefore limit myself here to the observation that, according to the statement of the local inhabitants,

172 the fragments reveal a clearly convex shape and seem to come from uncommonly strong pots made of baked clay. Until now I have been unable to determine whether other objects such as bones, tools, weapons, etc. are occasionally also found along with the fragments.

3. Explanations

173 In conclusion, after a short summary, I should like to attempt a
172 few explanations of what has been said above. —The stories that occur among many peoples of the world dealing with the Flood and the building of a tower reaching to the sky also belong to the oldest and most strongly rooted traditions of the Lepchas. The current version of the legend of the tower building places the site on the plateau of Laramdin. As a proof, so to speak, of the correctness of this tradition, it is cited that right up to the present day the fragments of the pots from which the tower supposedly was built can be found here. Yet it seems questionable to me whether the doubtlessly very old tower legend was always brought into connection with the discoveries made in Daramdin. I suspect rather that the first potsherd discoveries were made in the course of the more intensive farming carried out in this region during the last hundred years; these soon brought about a corresponding variation of the legend. Supporting this assumption is a remark contained in G. B. Mainwaring's A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), one of the oldest publications about the Lepchas. The relevant passage, found on page XX of the Introduction, states: "On the top of the lofty Sung li hlo, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas (Na ong), now extinct, endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rocks and blocks of stones as the ruins are shown on the place."

As is evident, in this version of the legend, written down more than seven decades ago, neither the plateau of Daramdin nor the use of clay pots is mentioned, and the place of the action is moved to the mountain Sung li hlo in the vicinity of Darjeeling.

172 It will be possible to give an absolutely sound explanation of the type and date of the discovered vessel fragments only after an intensive investigation of a large number of the findings. Possibly the potsherds stem from an early settlement that later was lost to oblivion. — The protected plateau would have offered a very favorable spot for such a settlement. Likewise it would not be out of the question that these settlers were Lepcha sibs or a people closely related to them, who used clay vessels as household objects.

114 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the
323 assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other
[437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas.
[418] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

•172 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave
764 goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

172 degree of baking between a reddish brown and gray black in color. The pieces come from vessels of the most varied sizes: from small, thin walled bowls with a flared edge as well as also from larger containers with a wall several centimeters thick. Possibly the findings stem from various strata, for in part of them we are dealing with fragments of vessels prepared with the aid of a potter's wheel, whereas others are remnants of crude, thick-walled pots shaped by hand. /897/ By far the greater number of the findings reveal no ornamentation at all. Only on a few pieces there are three stripes of a dark color which run horizontally on the outer edge of the mouth of the vessel; one small item shows a vague, uncolored, serrated pattern [Wolfszahnmuster] that was scratched into the surface.

Concerning the settlement of the Daramdim Plateau I was also able to obtain a little information from the members of the Limbu people who live in this region. According to them, Limbu farmers cleared at the beginning of the nineteenth century the virgin forest that covered great portions of this high plateau. In the course of this work they ran across a ruined stone tower which they carried away in order to make room for a field. —It seems here to be a question of one of the old stone watchtowers, a few of which even today are still standing in this part of the Nepalese-Tibetan border region. They are possibly fortifications from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

The local Limbus assert further that even in the valleys of the two rivers bordering the Daramdin estate potsherds are frequently found washed down there from the plateau by the rain.

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a
227 large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 592 Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

● 173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable know-
[824] ledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[551] [7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Panung-mu (woman from Panung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●173 century; about a generation later the Lepchas started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in land must have developed somewhat later; according to native tradition the land below the monastery—that is to say the more protected valley ground—has been divided into private property from time immemorial, but the higher ground was common property and was acquired and cleared as was wanted. At the time of Kahlyeu's father—that is to say about 1840—this ground too was divided up, and today all cultivatable ground is privately owned. Kahlyeu also said that until about 120 years ago only millet was cultivated, and not dry rice; but this seems to me improbable in view of the fact that the religious observances[8] are much more concerned with dry rice, than with millet or any other crop.

342 When new houses are made they are always built in the late autumn months, after the gathering of the harvest. This date is 777 dictated by two reasons; at no other period would people have sufficient leisure and other dates would be ill-omened. The intending builder gathers materials for some months beforehand. The site of a new house is decided by a number of metaphysical considerations.

[779] First of all there is a lamaist book called Sachet Zai Putta which contains general rules of a very minute nature, indicating what sites are lucky, and what unlucky. This book is said to have been composed by four Gods who gathered together at Gyakar (perhaps Benares) to compile rules so that people should know which sites are good and which bad, which fruitful and which barren, where children can be born, and where they cannot. The following is a small selection of these very detailed regulations:

'A good site is, if there is a mountain to the south and below a slope. It is good if there is a stream on either side of the slope and trees in front. It is good if there is an outcrop of rock to the east and a flat plain to the west and a water fall opposite. Roads from east and north are good, but those from south and west should be avoided as they are used by Deut *moong* (fever devil). If there is a tree to the north directly below the house it should never be cut down; if, however, there is one to the south directly above it, it should be cut, or, if it be too big to cut down, a knife or some other piece of iron should be stuck into it. If the earth on which the

[8] See Chapter Nine. It is probable that millet was historically the earlier crop: what I question is the date of the introduction of dry rice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 [97] few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

[73 [797 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

introduced into the country about the middle of the seventeenth century by Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo, the patron saint of Sikkim.

Lha-Tsun is so intimately connected with the local form of Lamaism, figures so frequently in the strange hotch-potch of fact and fiction that passes for history, that it is essential to give some details of his life, so far as they are known.

Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo is a Tibetan title meaning "The great reverend god." His ordinary religious name is Kun-zan num-gye, or "The entirely victorious essence of goodness"; but he is also known by the title of Lha-tsun num kha Jig-may, or "the reverend god who fears not the sky." This is with reference to his alleged power of flying. He has yet another name, being sometimes referred to as Kusho Dsog-ch'en Ch'em-bo, or "The great and honourable Dsog-ch'en," the latter part of which name means literally "The great end," this being the technical name for the particular system of mysticism practised by the Nin-ma-pa sect, of which he was a member. Kusho means merely "the honourable," and is the title by which all persons of position are addressed in Tibet.

He was born in the fire-bird year of the tenth of the sixty-year cycles, corresponding to A.D. 1595, in the district of Kongbu, in south-eastern Tibet. Having spent many years in various monasteries and in travelling through Tibet and Sikkim, he eventually arrived in Lhasa in 1648, where he obtained such repute by his learning that he attracted the favourable notice of one Nag-wan, the greatest of the Grand Lamas, who shortly afterwards became the first of the so-called Dalai Lamas. Indeed, it is said that it was mainly through the special instructions given by Lha-tsun to the Grand Lama that the latter was so favourably treated by the Emperor of China and confirmed in the temporal rule of Tibet.

The detailed account of the saint's meeting with Nag-wan is worth citing as an example of the curious blend of the crude and the marvellous, of which most of these indigenous narratives are composed.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

followed by the rapid development of the country. Settlers /75
from Nepal flocked in, and the population, which in 1891 was returned at 30,458, had grown to 59,014 ten years later; an increase of 93.7 per cent."

The story of the Nepalese invasion is still known by most of /73 ●
the older people. This is the version told me by the Mandal of Lingtem, who was given it by his father:

In olden days the Maharaja of Sikkim lived in Fyung Di. One day his chief minister, who was also a famous Lama, said to him: "Your Highness; war is undoubtedly coming before long, so let us get away with our possessions while there is still time." To this, however, the King replied: "What do you, a mere Tibetan, know of war or other affairs of state? Even if war does come, cannot I and my seven sons defeat with ease any paltry Gurkha army that may come to attack us?" But the minister, whose name was Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo,* was not convinced, and taking leave of the King he gathered together his considerable possessions and set off towards the Chumbi Valley. Shortly after his departure news arrived that the Gurkha army was approaching the capital; and even before it reached Fyung Di it had already inflicted several defeats on the peace-loving Lepchas. The Queen and her sons implored the King to flee; but he was adamant and remained alone on guard. He stood with his shield in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and threatened to cut down anyone who dared to approach him. But his six grown-up sons were more prudent, and decided to set off on their own. The Queen remained behind with her husband, and it was only when the invading army had already reached the outskirts of the town that the King at last acceded to his wife's entreaties. They hurried off just as they were; the palace was left open and nothing was even

* Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo must have been dead for nearly two hundred years when the Nepal war took place; but, as I have already noted, Sikkim history is a mixture of fact and fiction, and the Lepcha likes to associate the patron saint of his country with every important happening. He will be found to figure in nearly every story of this sort; if not in person, then in a reincarnated form.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 locked up. After the two of them had gone a mile or so from the palace, the Queen suddenly remembered that she had left her youngest son, a baby in arms, behind. She went back alone, snatched up the child, and was preparing to leave when she suddenly heard a crash behind her. She turned round to see what had happened and at once noticed that the mask of Lord Konchen had fallen to the ground. She picked it up, put it in her bosom with the baby and hurried away, rejoining the King shortly after. It is for this reason that Konchen is now worshipped by the Maharaja of Sikkim as a very special deity.

After a long and weary march the King and Queen came to Kabi, a small village in the vicinity of the Penlong La. In the meanwhile the Gurkhas had taken possession of Fyung Di and had plundered the palace, stealing even the gold and silver sacred images, of which there were many. There were also copies of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. These were unlike ordinary books in that they were printed entirely in letters of the purest gold. The Gurkhas took all these books outside, piled them on a large flat stone, and set fire to them. When the embers had died down the gold was collected and from each volume a lump the size of a hen's egg was obtained. All this loot the Gurkhas sent off to Mikrum Di, which was the principal palace in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. All the Lepchas were very frightened of the conquering Gurkhas, especially when they saw the palace stripped of all its treasures. They saw that there was nothing they could do to stem the tide, and so they moved off into the hills, into the most remote corners and valleys they could find. They took with them their cattle and as much of the property as they could carry, hoping that the Gurkhas would never discover their hiding places. Most of them went to the headwaters of the Rangnyit river.

Now the King did not know what to do, as although the Gurkhas seemed to have retired for the moment, so also had his own people, and a great part of the country in consequence became entirely empty. Eventually he decided to take his wife

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and children with him and to ask the King of Tibet for refuge; for although his Queen was a Lepcha, the King himself was a pure Tibetan. Later on the Gurkhas returned and swarmed once more all over Sikkim. Because of this the Lepchas were driven into still more remote places. Some of these were so inaccessible that the people had to live entirely on the produce of the jungle, eating even ferns. The Gurkhas had brought with them a huge mill made of lead, from which they cut off bits to make ammunition for their weapons. They carried this mill as far as Rungjyol (a place in the Talung Valley, on the other side of the river from Lingtem), but it was too much of a burden for them to carry it further. Its remains were still in existence until a few generations ago, but it has now all been used up by the local people. The Gurkhas advanced as far as Sakyong Pantung, where they buried their swords and shields to mark what was now the boundary of their country.

The Lepchas now began to leave their hiding places and they all collected together in order to decide on a plan of campaign. It was arranged to send a deputation to the Maharaja, who was still in Tibet, and to ask him what they should do. The King, however, was unable to give them an answer and told them to do whatever they thought best. After this the Lepchas gathered above Sakyong Pantung; and by degrees drove the Gurkhas back by stoning them. They could make no reply, since they had buried all their arms. The Gurkhas were gradually pushed lower and lower down the valley until eventually they reached the junction of the two rivers. Here the confusion was so great that the river became choked with bodies and a lake formed above the dam of corpses: but still a few desperate Gurkhas managed to hold on to the position. That night all the Lepchas went up on to the surrounding hills, where they set light to the bamboo forest, which burnt with a popping noise. This terrified the Gurkhas, who thought the noise was that of fire-arms being discharged. At the same time the Lepchas prepared stakes of pointed cane, lighted them and discharged them from their

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 bows. The Gurkhas were by now thoroughly terrified and their remnants retired in disorder. The Maharaja was thereupon summoned from Tibet and as soon as he arrived the country was finally cleared of the marauding Gurkhas, and the boundary fixed. It ran along the line Niu-oong-Munshi-oong-Du-Du Kosi (presumably the Dudh Kosi) and Tambar Kosi. For a long time the Maharaja used to collect taxes in this area, but no longer does so, as it is now part of Nepal. After settling the boundary, the Maharaja returned to Fyung Di, but he found only the walls of his place still standing. He summoned many Lamas and asked them to call the Lord Konchen, to whom a bullock was first sacrificed. At the same time all the other gods were also summoned. Konchen was told that since his was the greatest influence in Sikkim he must help in getting revenge upon the Gurkhas, who had wrought such terrible destruction all over the country. He agreed to help and said he would send devils to destroy Nepal. One year later the Mikrum Di, in which all the stolen treasure was stored, was engulfed in a rising lake. All the occupants of the palace, including the then King of Nepal, were drowned, but it is said that the palace is still visible beneath the water. Ever since that day half the wealth of Sikkim has remained buried in the lake and the other half is stored in Tulung Monastery, where it was put by Lha-Tsun-Ch'em-Bo. It cannot be touched because Lha-Tsun left it in the charge of certain devils who would immediately take their revenge if anyone tried to touch it. It is for this reason that the Maharaja can make no use of it. No one has ever seen the treasure, but the boxes in which it is stored are still visible in Talung. It is said that the people of Nepal are still very afraid of the Lepchas, but actually, so said the Mandal: "the only thing Lepchas are any good at nowadays is carrying other people's loads!"

175 The settlement of Gurkhas in Sikkim is no new thing, and I imagine there must have been a number already there even before the war with Nepal. Their coming has not been altogether a bad thing, for neither the Lepcha, still less the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Tibetan, is at heart an agriculturist. Left to himself the 175
Lepcha is but a poor cultivator, and he had need of the Gurkhas to show him how to make the best use of his land. The Gurkha needed land, the Lepcha instruction; but probably no one realised how this give and take would end. However it was, a line has now been fixed beyond which Gurkhas may not acquire land; and none but Lepchas may settle in Jongu. But to continue the Mandal's story:

Many, many years ago, in the time of Raja Pun-tsok, there 173
was a man named Laso Kaji, who thought he would like to possess the district of Jongu, which is one of the most fertile parts of Sikkim. He went to the Raja and told him of his desire, saying that the land he wanted was only a tiny piece, stony and unfertile. Since the Raja had not himself travelled, and indeed did not even know the names of his villages, he readily consented, at which Laso departed happy. Now the Raja had a favourite minister whose name was Yuk Ting Takshay, and this man he trusted greatly. He badly wanted some special poison plants, called *Sumdo* and *Vim-pot*, which were to be found only high up in the mountains, and which had the peculiar quality at night of shining like bright flames. They were extremely rare, and their possession brought with it the acquisition of every kind of riches. Yuk Ting Takshay set off on his quest, taking with him vast quantities of gold and silver, many copper vessels, a huge leaden mill, ivory, and a large assortment of such musical instruments as are used in monasteries. There was also much rich clothing, of the sort worn only by rajas and other great men. All these things he brought from Fyung Di, where the capital was in those days.

In the course of his travels Yuk Ting Takshay came to a place called Navar Hlo, which he reached just as night was falling. This place was the home of many devils, who refused to let him continue. But when they saw all the beautiful treasure he had brought they agreed to let him pass provided he left it behind. This he did; and in return the devils turned night into day, so that the minister need not

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 delay. All this treasure, which was meant as an offering to the gods, is said to be still concealed in a cave above the Talung: and as for the lead, it is still there, but has much decreased since the local people, in the course of generations, have been gradually whittling it away. The next day Yuk Ting Takshay got to a place called Toong Voong, and, arrived there, he asked to whom it belonged. "It is the property of Laso Kaji," they told him: and as he proceeded on his way he received always the same answer. At this time Laso Kaji himself was living in a house on the site of Jiroong's present home, and when Yuk Ting Takshay came to it he turned him out, whereupon he fled over the hills to Parfok, where he lived the whole of the following year, unbeknown to the authorities. Meanwhile Yuk Ting Takshay went on with his search and in due course returned to Fyung Di, when he told the Raja what he had seen. He told him how he had been deceived by Laso Kaji, to whom, unknowingly, he had ceded an immense track of land. When he had considered the story the Raja decided to send Yuk Ting Takshay back again in order to take possession of the land. Now below Mangen, near the present bridge, there is a hot spring called Rong Rong Tcha Chu, and it was here that Yuk Ting Takshay decided to camp. He had with him many servants, and these soon got into the way of going across the river to steal manioc and other plants. When the people on the far side of the river heard of this they went and complained to Laso Kaji, who was still living in Parfok, and whom they regarded as their ruler. He asked who these thieves were, but they could not tell him. He told them, however, to send twelve men across in the dead of night in order to kill as many of the thieves as they could. Before they could put their plan into action Yuk Ting Takshay's men got wind of their approach and started to run away, so that when they reached the camp they found only Yuk Ting Takshay. He was sitting alone in the hot spring, enjoying its warmth, and at the same time shouting to his men to come back and help him. Yuk Ting Takshay asked the men who

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

they were, and they told him they had been sent by Laso 173
Kaji with orders to kill both him and his men. Yuk Ting Takshay was very angry, and single-handed though he was, he managed to disarm all of Laso's men. Later on, when the row had somewhat subsided, Yuk Ting Takshay's followers returned, and the next morning he sent them across the river to find out what Laso Kaji meant. Laso was somewhat perplexed, as he had no idea of whom he had attacked. He decided to slaughter a bullock and sent it across as something in the nature of a peace offering. At the same time he sent word apologising for what he had done, and particularly asked Yuk Ting Takshay not to let the Raja know what had happened, for he feared for his life. Yuk Ting Takshay accepted the carcass and agreed to do what was asked of him, but at the same time he ordered Laso Kaji to leave the district, which he did. He went off no one knows where, but his descendants are now living in Namchi. From that day Jongu was taken over by the Raja and has formed part of the private estate ever since.

Laso Kaji's descendants seem to have kept up the family 175
tradition of lawlessness, for in 1861 we find the then holder of the title opposing a British force.

Writing on the 20th February from Rungpodon, on the banks of the Teesta, Colonel Gawler describes his meeting with him:

"I considered it expedient that our point for crossing the Teesta should be within, at most, three days' march of Tumloong (to obviate our being obliged to form any large depots on the other side of the river); but, as this would necessitate a march for some distance up the right bank from Temi, I determined on cutting all bridges below the point I might select, so that neither my force nor convoys might be liable to annoyance during what would be a flank march.

"I therefore started the next morning, an hour before daylight, to search for bridges, and about nine o'clock found a large one at the Linsing Ghat, a few miles above the Took Ghat. On approaching it I was met by three natives bearing

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

●173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER III

THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES OF SIKKIM

A. The Lepchas

The Lapches or Lepchas are supposed to be the original 101
inhabitants of Sikkim. They call themselves Rong; the Tibetans call them Mon, and the Bhutanese, Meri. The Mongoloid problem can best be studied through the Lepchas of the Southern Himalayas and hence they are dealt with more thoroughly.

According to one opinion the Lepchas are supposed 173
to have come not from Tibet, but from the east of the mountains from Assam and Upper Burma.[22] Their own tradition, how-
ever, states that their original home was in the neighbourhood [103]
of the great mountain, Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga[23] the second highest mountain in the world. That is the Tibetan name and means the "Great Glacier of the Five Store-rooms." The Lepcha name for the mountain is, "King-tzum-song-bu." King-tzum means "Highest part of the forehead," song-bu means "the highest." Literally it means, "the highest over our head." This Lepcha name is reproduced phonetically by the Tibetans as "Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga," which has quite a different meaning. This snow-covered mountain has [776]
an important part to play as the habitat of the spirits. King-tzum-rum is the god of happiness; Rum-king-tzum is the god of fate.[24] From it the Lepchas derive the name Rong, by which they are known. Rong means "peak" or "mountain peak" and has the same significance as the word Arong.

Another tradition has it that the place of their origin is on the holy mountain Kailasa (Ti se) way up in Tibet. On the mountain is the stone Ne-long which bears the footprints [778
of Buddha and of animals. The god, Pum-rum, protector of 776]
the hunters, lives there. Pum-rum is also another name for the Supreme God of the Lepchas as we shall soon see. The

22. J. C. White, Sikkim and Bhutan, London, 1909, p. 7.
23. Kangchenjunga, Fig. 17 & 18.
24. G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, Berlin 1898, 17a, 356 b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 oldest homeland bears the name Damsang. We have here an inkling of the Tibetan Lama influence, which, as in Hindu tradition, links the original homeland with the holy district. Since the King-tzum-song-bu is very closely linked with the myths of the Lepchas we shall go more deeply into a study of it.

(a) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

773 The myths of the creation are of special importance.
776 "Create" in the Lepcha language is called "ayit" or "it" in its abbreviated form. Another word for create is "de-bo." "It-rum" or "de-rum" means "god of creation"; "Rum" by itself means "god." "Pum-thing-rum" signifies the same. "Pum bo" means "Principal," "Chief," "God." The name "It-bo" or "It-bo-mu" is again taken from the creative action of god. Other names are, "Ta-she-thing," "Sa-dzug-rum." The latter are connected with the sun god and are used by some as the emblem of the Supreme God.

The following is the myth about creation: In ancient times Rum created a great expanse of water. Nothing else existed at the time. Then he created on the bed of the water the fish "ngo." Next he formed three pairs of deities who lay down crosswise on the fish. The first of the pairs were Rug-lu and Rug-lom, and after them were Mon-li and Röng-gul, Pö-ril and Pö-dong. These are three pairs of male and female deities. Over these were fashioned Söm-li and Söm-nag-mön-mu, a couple who as man and wife are supposed to belong to the human race. They all carried the earth which rested on them in the form of a dish. The slightest movement of the fish resulted in earthquakes. Rum then created the great mountains of the earth, the chief of which is King-tzum-song-bu; then four more peaks, Pön-dām, Pön-tzum-dju, Pön-tzum-tang-rem-dju, Don-dong-tang-nyik-dju. Another story records that two chief mountains were created, *viz.*, the Kang-chen and the Kang-lo. Another Mun makes a contrary statement, "The snow-capped mountain Kang-chen-rum was created first and as a companion to it, Nyo-ling-rum, the goddess of the great ocean was created." In some versions of this story the goddess is named Lyang-ser-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

from beyond the snows, but they have connected the incidents with their present place of residence. There is a hill visible from Darjeeling, which, as the tale hath it, when all the country was under water, arose and supported a ship containing a few persons, all other people being drowned. The hill rose up like a horn, (hence the name a-róng, a horn,) and afterwards subsided to its present form. It is known to the Europeans as the Camel's back. On the top of the lofty Sung-lilho, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas—(the na-óng) now extinct,—endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rock and blocks of stone, as the ruins, are shown on the place."[47] We ourselves heard this saga of the tower and its ruins, in Darjeeling. In Git-biyong, we heard the following version of this saga, "The Lepchas filled a great many pitchers with earth, and piled them higher and higher over each other in an effort to reach the heavens. The man on the top reached so high that with the aid of a long hook he fancied he could link earth with heaven. Whereupon he shouted to the people beneath him, 'Quick! Pass a hook on to me.' It must be noted that in the Lepcha language the word for 'hook' and for 'cut off' have an identical pronunciation. The people yelled, 'Why cut off?' From above sounded the urgent answer, 'Quick, the hook.' They understood it to be, 'Quick, cut off!' So they cut off the rope and their tower came crumbling to the ground."

Here is another version of the story, "When (after the flood) the world was full of people once more, a tribe called the Na-ong, or 'Ignorant persons' prepared to ascend to the Rum country, and they began to build a tower of earthen pots. They piled them so high that the Rum country was only one pole away. The creator thought they were becoming too eager and too zealous, and that it was not good for them.

So he thought he would create confusion, and make them all speak in different tongues, so that they would misunderstand one another. The man at the top shouted, 'Kok vim yang tale' (hand up the pole with the hook,) while the men at the bottom heard the words, 'Chek tala' (cut it

47. G. B. Mainwaring, A grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) Language, Calcutta, 1876, p. XX.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 173 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 77K The myth describing the building of the tower demonstrates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 329 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 336 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 337.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796
782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples
771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a
793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were
824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the
825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even
222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will
261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water
[272] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared,
252 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like
262 rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 453.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. [131 144] seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of 175 is large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three nturies, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the nglish. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered 161 epchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of kkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in kkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were nployed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropo- 174 gists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere e as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet d Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has parently been found between the Lepcha language and some alect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no dition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the ople of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of 175 eir own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. epcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though [101] philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the ssian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word uld appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present rjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

174 categories—food-gatherers, cultivators, and herders.[12] In a way the Lepchas today straddle all three types, though domestic animals play a relatively small part in their economy.

Lepcha tradition, as has already been stated, places the transition from food-gathering to cultivating about two centuries ago. But I question whether this statement can be taken at its face value. It is extremely difficult to count on the age of tradition or mythology, but it seems to me *ipso facto* improbable that the Mun mythology would have been completely changed and re-made after the Lepchas' conversion to lamaism. Now in the Mun ritual and validating mythology domestic animals play a very important part for they are the only acceptable articles of sacrifice; wild animals can only be used by hunters. Also the most constant and important of the Mun's calendrical ceremonies are connected with crops, and in particular with dry rice and millet. These are ceremonies which affect the whole population. There is also the tradition that, while the upper slopes of the valley were common ground until quite recent times, the land down by the river has been privately owned from time immemorial. The private ownership of uncultivated land which would never be particularly rich in game seems quite pointless.

It seems to me probable that up to about three centuries ago the Lepchas—presuming they were already living in the same country, and there seems no reason to question it—cultivated a certain amount of rice and millet on the lower slopes of the valley, probably selecting the wild varieties which grow in the Himalayan forests, and kept some domestic animals, probably oxen. They very likely did not cultivate enough for all their needs, and eked out the cultivated food with hunting and wild forest produce. When the tribes of Tibet, and later of Nepal, amalgamated into single states with expansionist policies, the Lepchas found themselves confronted with war-like enemies against whom they were practically defenceless, for in their lonely Himalayan valleys they can have seen few strangers. There is no account of their resisting the Tibetan colonisation, but they fled from the invading Nepali and Bhutanese. These foreigners represented for them death and slavery, at the least loss of their possessions; and so to save themselves they abandoned their cultivation and took to a nomadic life in the forests. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth

[12] See for example C. Daryll Forde's *Habitat, Economy and Society* (London 1934).

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

174

century Sikkim was, we know, the seat of constant wars; and it is not surprising that old Serving claims that about 1850 there were only four houses in Lingthem. As the country became peaceful the Lepchas settled down again to a mainly agricultural life, only to find, outside Zongu, that they were unable to compete with the more industrious and competent Nepali and Sikkimese. They had developed a way of life suitable for isolation; neither in war nor in competition could they stand up to other people. In the reserve of Zongu the introduction this century of cardamum and terraced fields bound them more securely to the land. They had neither time nor reason for hunting. The money-producing cardamum crop did away with the necessity, which existed in earlier times, of travelling to trade forest produce against cloth and salt and metal. From partial or complete nomadism the Lepchas have become almost completely attached to their fields; they have less reasons for dealing with strangers than at any time in the last three centuries. It is probable that this growing isolation will increase even more the Lepcha's great natural timidity in the face of an unknown person; even today 'unknown' has almost the same connotations as 'dangerous'.

[p. 112 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 346 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in [177] 341 close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 opposed to the views of Mr. Risley [1]), Colonel Dalton [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers Drs. Campbell and Hooker, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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[142]
[291]

A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. Hoffmann).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1889, IV. p. 5.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]). They are especially near the 'Arieng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pó* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain FORBES, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all.

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapche' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2]), because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mô-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Ialaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu.

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3]), is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4]) by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He

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[1]) From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nangas*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Naga*s is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2]) It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ‚Welsh' or ‚the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ‚Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. TAYLOR's „Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3]) The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikkim'.

[4]) This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. PAUL (pp. 1—30), where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1686, died 1717 A. D.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

441 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [223] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[177] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[368] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[177] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

farming must already have been effected by the Rong in very early times. 205 174

Gorer believes that the Rong were hunters about three hundred years ago, and that they carried on a little farming with dry rice and millet and kept a few cattle. When the Bhutanese and the Nepalese overran the land, the Lepchas withdrew into the forests, where they gave up farming and lived solely by hunting. When peace was restored they again took up to farming.[100]

(*l*) The Anthropological classification of the Rong

There are two basic types among the Lepchas which have to be clearly differentiated. The one with the long small face, the high forehead, the high narrow nose, and the well-defined eye-brow prominences; the eye is mostly without the Mongolian fold (if the upper lid droops it does not cover the inner corner of the eye). The face is also well-modelled; the cheek bones are not very prominent. The form of the head is mesocephalic or dolichocephalic. These people are taller and somewhat above the average height. The colour of the skin is light yellow. (Fig. 45). 142 141

The other type has a wide short face, a wide low forehead, well-defined supra-orbital ridges, a broad nose with depressed root and cheek bones that are somewhat more prominent. The eye often shows the Mongolian fold. The lips are thin, the shape of the head is brachycephalic, and the colour of the skin light yellow. Both the types have a slight growth of beard and a scanty growth of hair all over the body. The Mongolian spot occurs among most of the children of both types. The Lepchas call the spot "ri-om" and say that children without the spot are delicate. (Fig. 46)

The Rong have well-proportioned bodies. The muscles of the thigh and calves are particularly well-formed because of the fact that they are tireless mountain climbers. On the average however, the Rong are more lightly built than the neighbouring people. The women have very finely cut features.

100. op. cit. p. 110.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

144 174 In the anthropology of the Rong, a two-fold classification is shown : a Mongoloid and a non-Mongoloid element. Our investigation has shown us this two-fold element in the religion and the economy of the Lepchas. From an anthropological standpoint we would like to draw a line of difference between the hunters and the farmers, thus forming two typical groups. The hunters with their hunting religion, sociology and economy represent the tall Rong type and are characterised by the larger physical build, the long small face, the open eye and the long small high nose. The farmers, on the other hand constitute the second group with shorter physiques, broad faces, broad nose, Mongolian eyefold, and prominent cheek bones.

Thus we see that the Rong bear evidences of a mixed culture, and this helps to solve many contradictions concerning them. Some believe that they have connections with the Tibetans. Others say that they wandered from the east along the Burma-Assam mountains. Our own belief is that the hunting component of the Rong are the primitive indigenous inhabitants of the forests of Sikkim. The farmers came from the east and have connections with such people as the Naga, the Lolo and the Miau.

197 174 144 The Rong language belongs to the pure group, that is to say, to the pronounless Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman languages. This bears out the facts that they experienced no Austro-Asiatic influence in the language as the Limbu did. Consequently the Austro-Asiatics cannot be held responsible for the non-Mongoloid element among the Lepchas. The only possibility is that among the pure Tibeto-Burmans and in a wider sense among the Tibeto-Chinese, there is an element purely non-Mongoloid and another that is Mongoloid. The study of the Rong therefore throws light on the Mongoloid problem and shows a formation of the Mongoloids within the Tibeto-Chinese Family (Tibeto-Burman is the large sub-group of this family of languages) and, in a very marked manner, among the farming peoples. This is in perfect agreement with the results of our research in Tibet. I found that the Tibetan Mongoloids are represented among the farming population. The cattle breeding nomads have very few Mongoloid features or none at all. Hence it is that

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ONE

THE LEPCHAS AND SIKKIM

i

THE Lepchas[1] are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kinchenjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountainous land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English. At the time of the 1931 census the 25,780 registered Lepchas were almost evenly divided between the Native State of Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of British India, 13,000 being in Sikkim and the rest in Darjeeling, with the exception of 66 who were employed, chiefly as gardeners, in Calcutta.

There is no generally accepted theory among those anthropologists who believe that every tribe originally came from somewhere else as to the place of origin of the Lepchas. Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested and a certain similarity has apparently been found between the Lepcha language and some dialect spoken in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and place the home of their ancestors—the people of Mayel—in one of the inaccessible valleys of Kinchenjunga.

The Lepchas do not appear ever to have resisted invasion of their own accord. Sikkim was apparently colonised by the Tibetans at some date prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century,[2]

[1] The Lepchas do not call themselves Lepchas; they call themselves *Rong*. 'Lepcha' is said to be a derogatory Nepali term—*lap-che*—meaning, though the philology is doubtful, 'nonsense talkers.' A parallel could be found in the Russian name for Germans—*nemetski*, which means 'the dumb ones.' Since all books dealing with the people and district refer to the Lepchas as Lepchas, it would seem merely pedantic and confusing to use the term *Rong*. The word would appear to have no other significance in Lepcha.

[2] I take the suggestion that Sikkim (which at that date included the present Darjeeling district) was colonised or at least dominated by the Tibetans before the beginning of the seventeenth century from *An Account of Tibet* by the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

175 but it would seem as though this original colonisation was little more than a feudal overlordship imposed by a small minority on the Lepcha population. After the internal revolution and Chinese wars in Tibet in the early seventeenth century three 'Red Hat' lamas fled to Sikkim, speedily converted the Lepchas and what other inhabitants there were, and created a Sikkimese Tibetan king; from this king the present Maharajah of Sikkim is indirectly descended. A subsequent legend puts back the conversion of Sikkim to lamaism some centuries earlier; it is said that one of the lamaist saints lived in the country and deposited sacred writings in various caves, where they were subsequently discovered.

From the time of the establishment of a Sikkimese kingdom the Lepchas became an 'inferior' subject race, under the domination of the Sikkimese Tibetans or Bhotias, to which race the Maharajah and the big landowners belonged. For a considerable period the Lepchas were debarred on account of their race from entering the lamaist monasteries, and, though this rule is now relaxed, it is questionable whether a Lepcha could today obtain an important position in the big monasteries outside the Lepcha reserve. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Lepchas fought with the Sikkimese against the continued invasions of the Nepali and Bhutanese; the country was then in a very uncertain state, and there was continuous slave-raiding; the memory of this is still kept lively by the threat which older people will make to a crying child that 'If you don't keep quiet a Tibetan (or Bhutanese) will come along with a big bag and take you away.' During the early nineteenth century a number of treaties were made between Sikkim and British India, broken, and re-made; finally in 1835 the Darjeeling district, naturally together with its inhabitants, was ceded by the Maharajah to the British in exchange for an annuity.

648 It can be seen that the Lepchas have been for a considerable period a subject race, under the domination of the Bhotias and English. They are agriculturists and hunters, but in Sikkim the best land has been taken by the Bhotias, and later by the Nepali who have immigrated into the country in great numbers; in Darjeeling much of the jungle and agricultural land has been turned into tea-estates, and the Lepchas have become workers on the

Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (edited by Filippo de Filippi. London. George Routledge. 1932). Writing in the early eighteenth century Desideri speaks of Sikkim (p. 118 and *passim*) as a province of Tibet, which had to pay tribute to Lhassa, and he makes no mention of its relatively recent conquest. He calls the province Brèe-mè-jong, which means, 'the nice country.'

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

778 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

into the lamaseries. The fact that in the beginning of the eighteenth 175
century King Chador invented an alphabet for them so that they could read the scriptures suggests that by that date the majority were already converted; but for a long time—and even today in some of the monasteries of Sikkim—Lepchas and other foreigners are not accepted for training as lamas, this privilege being exclusive to pure-born and healthy Tibetans and Sikkimese (Bhotiyas). But in lamaism the layman has practically no rôle at all; he cannot pray to, address or influence the supernaturals save through the intermediary of a lama; and therefore conversion to lamaism without admission to instruction could mean little more than a sort of voluntary tax. The first monastery in Sikkim, that of Sanga Chelling, was founded in 1697, the Talung monastery in 1789, Lingthem monastery in 1855, and Gyatong in 1860.[4] The Lepcha monasteries are said to be under the jurisdiction of Pemiongchi monastery—the largest in Sikkim—which belongs to the Lhatsun-pa sub-sect of the Nyingma-pa.

Like all other religions lamaism is a compound of a number of 179
heterogeneous elements. The chief component is Mahayana Buddhism, or 'the greater vehicle' (itself an elaboration of Hinayana or primitive Buddhism—'the lesser vehicle'), to which has accreted a good deal of tantric Hinduism, some Chinese and Mongolian elements, and possibly the original Tibetan Bön-po religion.[5] Like other religions too, lamaism presents three aspects: a justifying mythology and scriptures, an ethic, and a social organisation.

The foundation and justification of lamaism is contained in the scriptures, above all in the two enormous collections of holy writings, the Kangyour or commandments (the Bible) and the Tangyour or commentaries (the Talmud). In these, together with other minor works, are to be found all knowledge and all necessary instruction for the conduct of life. The books have by themselves a talismanic virtue, and the reading of them is the essential preliminary to acquiring merit. These books apparently contain a

[4] I have taken these dates, and one or two other general statements from *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, vol. 1 (Calcutta 1894), particularly from the section *Lamaism in Sikkim* (pp. 241–391) by L. A. Waddell. Here, as in his book *The Buddhism of Tibet* (2nd. edition Heffer's, 1934), Dr. Waddell is exclusively concerned with the Tibetans and Sikkimese, and only mentions the Lepchas incidentally.

[5] Some modern critics suggest that this Bön-po religion may be the remnants of an historically earlier and unrecorded conversion of Tibet to Buddhism.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

introduced into the country about the middle of the seventeenth century by Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo, the patron saint of Sikkim.

Lha-Tsun is so intimately connected with the local form of Lamaism, figures so frequently in the strange hotch-potch of fact and fiction that passes for history, that it is essential to give some details of his life, so far as they are known.

Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo is a Tibetan title meaning "The great reverend god." His ordinary religious name is Kun-zan num-gye, or "The entirely victorious essence of goodness"; but he is also known by the title of Lha-tsun num kha Jig-may, or "the reverend god who fears not the sky." This is with reference to his alleged power of flying. He has yet another name, being sometimes referred to as Kusho Dsog-ch'en Ch'em-bo, or "The great and honourable Dsog-ch'en," the latter part of which name means literally "The great end," this being the technical name for the particular system of mysticism practised by the Nin-ma-pa sect, of which he was a member. Kusho means merely "the honourable," and is the title by which all persons of position are addressed in Tibet.

He was born in the fire-bird year of the tenth of the sixty-year cycles, corresponding to A.D. 1595, in the district of Kongbu, in south-eastern Tibet. Having spent many years in various monasteries and in travelling through Tibet and Sikkim, he eventually arrived in Lhasa in 1648, where he obtained such repute by his learning that he attracted the favourable notice of one Nag-wan, the greatest of the Grand Lamas, who shortly afterwards became the first of the so-called Dalai Lamas. Indeed, it is said that it was mainly through the special instructions given by Lha-tsun to the Grand Lama that the latter was so favourably treated by the Emperor of China and confirmed in the temporal rule of Tibet.

The detailed account of the saint's meeting with Nag-wan is worth citing as an example of the curious blend of the crude and the marvellous, of which most of these indigenous narratives are composed.

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175 In the year previous to that in which the fifth Grand Lama went to China, probably about A.D. 1649, the Grand Lama told his attendants that he had dreamt a sage would visit him that day. Should he do so he was at once to be admitted to the presence. Lha-tsun, arriving at the site now named Pargo-K'alin, immediately below the Potala, the Dalai Lama's palace, blew loudly a *kalin*, or trumpet made from a human thigh-bone; but the castle guard, in ignorance of Lha-tsun's identity, seized him and tied him to the Do-ring monolith as a punishment for daring to trumpet so close to the palace. The saint, however, soon caused the whole hill of Potala to shake, and by this means his arrival was brought to the notice of the Grand Lama, who ordered his instant release and admission.

On coming into the presence of the Grand Lama he walked boldly up and struck the latter with his fist and then vomited before him, much to the astonishment and disgust of the attendant courtiers. The saint then explained his action: "You are shortly going to China," he said; "and on the way a great danger awaits you, but my striking you has rid you of that danger. In China you will find yourself in great peril some day. When that happens consult this paper which I now give you, and you will be relieved. My vomiting in your presence means that you will ultimately be invested with great power and riches through my good offices."

The dilemma prophesied at this time turned out to be a query posed by the Emperor of China regarding the "essence of the rainbow colour," which quite confounded the Grand Lama. But he suddenly remembered the episode with the saint, consulted the paper, and found that it contained the required information. He so astonished the Emperor by the sagacity of his reply that he loaded him with honours and riches. The Grand Lama, on his return from China, offered Lha-tsun much treasure as a reward for the services he had rendered: this, however, the saint refused.

Previous to his visit to Lhasa it is said that the saint,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ccompanied by a few disciples, journeyed to the south-west 175
f Tibet, saying: "According to the prophecy of Guru Rimpoche I must go and open the northern gate of the hidden country of the rice-valleys,' De-mo-jong, meaning Sikkim; and I must develop that country religiously." He hen proceeded by way of Shigatse and Sakya to Zar, a hort distance to the north of Tashi-rab-ka near the Nepal rontier, where he founded a monastery.

He next attempted to enter Sikkim by way of Jongri, but ould find no path, and remained for many days in a cave, he name of which means "the very pleasant grove," near Kan-la nan-ma. There "the everlasting summit of the five epositories of snow," the mountain god Konchen, transormed himself into a wild goose and conversed with the age; and here, according to the prophecy of Guru Rimpoche, e composed the book named "The Complete Book of Worship and Offerings for Kinchinjunga."

At this time another Lama, of the Kar-tok-pa sub-sect, ame searching for a path into Sikkim. He tried, without uccess, the so-called "Monkey-back rock" (with reference o its semblance to a monkey sitting with its hands behind ts back), and then the road from Jongri; but having reached he cave of "the very pleasant grove" he fell in with the aint, who told him that since he was not destined to open 'the northern gate" he should go round and try the western ntrance.

Lha-tsun then flew miraculously to the upper part of Mount Kabru, where once again he blew his *kalin:* and after n interval of two weeks he flew down to where his servants were collected and guided them to Norbu-gang in Sikkim.

Soon after this there arrived two other *Nin-ma* Lamas. By way of "the western gate" of Singalila came the Kartok-pa Lama already mentioned, whose name was "The Great Soul," and a Lama of the Na-dak-pa sect named "The Great Sage," who had opened "the southern gate" by way of Darjeeling and Namchi. The place where these three Lamas met was afterwards called by the Lepchas Yok-sam,

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175 which means "(the place of) the three superior ones."

The three Lamas now held council together, at which Lha-tsun said: "We three Lamas have reached a new and irreligious country. We must have a 'dispenser of gifts,' a king, to rule the country on our behalf." To this the Na-dak-pa Lama replied: "I am descended from the celebrated Terton Na-dak Nan-rel, who was himself a king; I should therefore be the king here." But the Kar-tok-pa Lama would have none of this. "Since I too am of royal lineage I have the right to rule," he said. But to this Lha-tsun now replied: "I should tell you that according to the prophecy of the Guru Rimpoche it is written that four noble brothers shall meet in Sikkim and there arrange for its government. We are three of these, having come respectively from the north, west, and south. Towards the east, so it is written, there is at this time a man named Pun-tsok, a descendant of the brave people of Kham, a province of Eastern Tibet; and according to the prophecy of the Master we should invite him to join us."

Two messengers were then dispatched to search for this Pun-tsok. Going towards the east of Sikkim they arrived at Gangtok, where they saw a man churning milk and asked him his name. He did not reply, but invited them to sit down, after which he gave them milk to drink. After they were somewhat refreshed the man said that his name was Pun-tsok. He was then conducted to the Lamas, who crowned him by placing the holy water-vase upon his head and anointed him with the water. They exhorted him to rule the country religiously and gave him Lha-tsun's own surname of Num-gye, with the additional title of "The great religious king."

Pun-tsok was at this time aged thirty-eight and he became a Lama in the same year. This was about A.D. 1641.

Lha-tsun spent the greater part of the rest of his life in Sikkim, exploring its caves and mountain recesses, composing its Lamaist legends, and fixing sites for temples and monastories. He first built a hut at Dub-de, which afterwards

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to 175
have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and
Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first
occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin 532
mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost 175
bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means
unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is
otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche.
A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is
a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with
human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right
hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian
teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been
subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last
reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at
Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at
Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently un-
known; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim
of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid
hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant
fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a
popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-
skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured 778
in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were
stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha
invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of
them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is
kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and
a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons.
These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy 778
worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure 842
for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
[212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

compiled from Tibetan and Chinese sources, the only ones available at the time it was written; and for this reason it places the Gurkhas in a somewhat unfavourable light. There is no doubt, however, that the Gurkhas were in the wrong: they had overrun Sikkim and even looted Shigatse, which, by reason of its being the home of the Tashi Lama, is one of the most venerated places in all Tibet. There is little doubt that the Chinese army actually entered Nepalese territory; but that they dictated terms within sight of the capital is not so sure. According to the Nepalese version of the story the Chinese were greatly impressed with the valour of the Gurkhas, and their General retired amicably after arranging for the despatch of a quinquennial trade mission to Pekin. The arrangement was faithfully kept and a mission went from Nepal to China once every five years. With the fall of the central government, however, the arrangement lapsed and has since been discontinued; but the relations between the two countries have remained friendly.

"On the breaking out of the Nepal War in 1814, Major Latter at the head of a British force occupied the Morang, and formed an alliance with the Raja of Sikkim, who gladly seized the opportunity of revenging himself on the Gurkhas. At the close of the war in 1816, the Raja was rewarded by a considerable accession of territory, which has been ceded to the British by Nepal. In February, 1835, the Raja granted the site of Darjeeling to the British, and received a pension of Rs. 3,000 per annum in lieu of it."

This last seems to have been an astute piece of business on somebody's part; a pension of little more than two hundred pounds a year in return for a grant of land which is now the richest tea-producing area in the whole of India.

"There was, however, a standing cause of quarrel between the Raja and the paramount power, due to the prevalence of slavery in Sikkim; the Raja's subjects were inveterate kidnappers, and the Raja himself was most anxious to obtain from the British authorities the restoration of runaway slaves. With some notion of enforcing the latter demand,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

175 Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, and Dr. Hooker, the famous naturalist, were seized in 1849 whilst travelling in Sikkim, and detained for six weeks. As a punishment for this outrage the Raja's pension was stopped, and a piece of territory, including the lower course of the Tista and the Sikkim tarai, was annexed. The practice of kidnapping Bengali subjects of the British Crown was, however, not discontinued; and two especially gross cases in 1860 led to an order that the Sikkim territory, north of the Ramman river and west of the Rangit, should be occupied until restitution was made. Colonel Gawler, at the head of a British force, with the Hon. Ashley Eden as envoy, advanced into Sikkim and proceeded to Tumlong, when the Raja was forced to make full restitution, and to sign a treaty (in March, 1861) which secured the rights of free trade, of protection for travellers, and of road-making. For many years the State was left to manage its own affairs; but for some time prior to 1888 the Tibetans were found to be intriguing with the Maharaja, who became more and more unfriendly. Affairs reached a climax in 1888, when war broke out with the Tibetans, who took up a position eleven miles within Sikkim territory. British troops were sent against them, and they were driven off with ease. In 1889 a political officer subordinate to the Commissioner of the Rajshai Division was stationed at Gangtok (now the capital of Sikkim) to advise and assist the Maharaja and his council; and this was followed in 1890 by the execution of a convention with the Chinese, by which the British protectorate over Sikkim and its exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of the State were recognised. Since the Tibetan expedition (the so-called Younghusband 'Mission') of 1904, the Political officer has been directly responsible to the Government of India.

"After the appointment of the Political officer in 1889 communications were greatly improved by the construction of roads and bridges, and the settlement of Nepalese was permitted in certain parts of the State. These measures were

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

followed by the rapid development of the country. Settlers /75
from Nepal flocked in, and the population, which in 1891 was returned at 30,458, had grown to 59,014 ten years later; an increase of 93.7 per cent."

The story of the Nepalese invasion is still known by most of /73
the older people. This is the version told me by the Mandal of Lingtem, who was given it by his father:

In olden days the Maharaja of Sikkim lived in Fyung Di. One day his chief minister, who was also a famous Lama, said to him: "Your Highness; war is undoubtedly coming before long, so let us get away with our possessions while there is still time." To this, however, the King replied: "What do you, a mere Tibetan, know of war or other affairs of state? Even if war does come, cannot I and my seven sons defeat with ease any paltry Gurkha army that may come to attack us?" But the minister, whose name was Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo,* was not convinced, and taking leave of the King he gathered together his considerable possessions and set off towards the Chumbi Valley. Shortly after his departure news arrived that the Gurkha army was approaching the capital; and even before it reached Fyung Di it had already inflicted several defeats on the peace-loving Lepchas. The Queen and her sons implored the King to flee; but he was adamant and remained alone on guard. He stood with his shield in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and threatened to cut down anyone who dared to approach him. But his six grown-up sons were more prudent, and decided to set off on their own. The Queen remained behind with her husband, and it was only when the invading army had already reached the outskirts of the town that the King at last acceded to his wife's entreaties. They hurried off just as they were; the palace was left open and nothing was even

* Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo must have been dead for nearly two hundred years when the Nepal war took place; but, as I have already noted, Sikkim history is a mixture of fact and fiction, and the Lepcha likes to associate the patron saint of his country with every important happening. He will be found to figure in nearly every story of this sort; if not in person, then in a reincarnated form.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 bows. The Gurkhas were by now thoroughly terrified and their remnants retired in disorder. The Maharaja was thereupon summoned from Tibet and as soon as he arrived the country was finally cleared of the marauding Gurkhas, and the boundary fixed. It ran along the line Niu-oong-Munshi-oong-Du-Du Kosi (presumably the Dudh Kosi) and Tambar Kosi. For a long time the Maharaja used to collect taxes in this area, but no longer does so, as it is now part of Nepal. After settling the boundary, the Maharaja returned to Fyung Di, but he found only the walls of his place still standing. He summoned many Lamas and asked them to call the Lord Konchen, to whom a bullock was first sacrificed. At the same time all the other gods were also summoned. Konchen was told that since his was the greatest influence in Sikkim he must help in getting revenge upon the Gurkhas, who had wrought such terrible destruction all over the country. He agreed to help and said he would send devils to destroy Nepal. One year later the Mikrum Di, in which all the stolen treasure was stored, was engulfed in a rising lake. All the occupants of the palace, including the then King of Nepal, were drowned, but it is said that the palace is still visible beneath the water. Ever since that day half the wealth of Sikkim has remained buried in the lake and the other half is stored in Tulung Monastery, where it was put by Lha-Tsun-Ch'em-Bo. It cannot be touched because Lha-Tsun left it in the charge of certain devils who would immediately take their revenge if anyone tried to touch it. It is for this reason that the Maharaja can make no use of it. No one has ever seen the treasure, but the boxes in which it is stored are still visible in Talung. It is said that the people of Nepal are still very afraid of the Lepchas, but actually, so said the Mandal: "the only thing Lepchas are any good at nowadays is carrying other people's loads!"

175 The settlement of Gurkhas in Sikkim is no new thing, and I imagine there must have been a number already there even before the war with Nepal. Their coming has not been altogether a bad thing, for neither the Lepcha, still less the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Tibetan, is at heart an agriculturist. Left to himself the 175 Lepcha is but a poor cultivator, and he had need of the Gurkhas to show him how to make the best use of his land. The Gurkha needed land, the Lepcha instruction; but probably no one realised how this give and take would end. However it was, a line has now been fixed beyond which Gurkhas may not acquire land; and none but Lepchas may settle in Jongu. But to continue the Mandal's story:

Many, many years ago, in the time of Raja Pun-tsok, there 173 was a man named Laso Kaji, who thought he would like to possess the district of Jongu, which is one of the most fertile parts of Sikkim. He went to the Raja and told him of his desire, saying that the land he wanted was only a tiny piece, stony and unfertile. Since the Raja had not himself travelled, and indeed did not even know the names of his villages, he readily consented, at which Laso departed happy. Now the Raja had a favourite minister whose name was Yuk Ting Takshay, and this man he trusted greatly. He badly wanted some special poison plants, called *Sumdo* and *Vim-pot*, which were to be found only high up in the mountains, and which had the peculiar quality at night of shining like bright flames. They were extremely rare, and their possession brought with it the acquisition of every kind of riches. Yuk Ting Takshay set off on his quest, taking with him vast quantities of gold and silver, many copper vessels, a huge leaden mill, ivory, and a large assortment of such musical instruments as are used in monasteries. There was also much rich clothing, of the sort worn only by rajas and other great men. All these things he brought from Fyung Di, where the capital was in those days.

In the course of his travels Yuk Ting Takshay came to a place called Navar Hlo, which he reached just as night was falling. This place was the home of many devils, who refused to let him continue. But when they saw all the beautiful treasure he had brought they agreed to let him pass provided he left it behind. This he did; and in return the devils turned night into day, so that the minister need not

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

they were, and they told him they had been sent by Laso 173
Kaji with orders to kill both him and his men. Yuk Ting Takshay was very angry, and single-handed though he was, he managed to disarm all of Laso's men. Later on, when the row had somewhat subsided, Yuk Ting Takshay's followers returned, and the next morning he sent them across the river to find out what Laso Kaji meant. Laso was somewhat perplexed, as he had no idea of whom he had attacked. He decided to slaughter a bullock and sent it across as something in the nature of a peace offering. At the same time he sent word apologising for what he had done, and particularly asked Yuk Ting Takshay not to let the Raja know what had happened, for he feared for his life. Yuk Ting Takshay accepted the carcass and agreed to do what was asked of him, but at the same time he ordered Laso Kaji to leave the district, which he did. He went off no one knows where, but his descendants are now living in Namchi. From that day Jongu was taken over by the Raja and has formed part of the private estate ever since.

Laso Kaji's descendants seem to have kept up the family 175
tradition of lawlessness, for in 1861 we find the then holder of the title opposing a British force.

Writing on the 20th February from Rungpodon, on the banks of the Teesta, Colonel Gawler describes his meeting with him:

"I considered it expedient that our point for crossing the Teesta should be within, at most, three days' march of Tumloong (to obviate our being obliged to form any large depots on the other side of the river); but, as this would necessitate a march for some distance up the right bank from Temi, I determined on cutting all bridges below the point I might select, so that neither my force nor convoys might be liable to annoyance during what would be a flank march.

"I therefore started the next morning, an hour before daylight, to search for bridges, and about nine o'clock found a large one at the Linsing Ghat, a few miles above the Took Ghat. On approaching it I was met by three natives bearing

175a flag of truce and two letters, which were immediately forwarded to Mr. Eden, the Special Commissioner.

"The natives informed me that Lassoo Kajee was on the other side (of the Teesta) and wished to come across.

"As I knew that Mr. Eden wished every facility to be afforded to natives to come in and return to their villages, and had heard Lassoo Kajee's name mentioned particularly, I said that he might come, and concealed my men in the jungles along the bank, near the bridge. There were several hours' delay while he was getting (as they informed us) his baggage ready, and during this time we observed that the stockades opposite were full of men, armed with matchlocks and rifles: I also observed one or two jingalls.[1] Across the river was about a stone's throw, and the opposite jungle was thick with faces peeping at us. There was a strongly marked difference between these curious ones and those who manned the stockades. The tall figures, features, attitudes, and demeanours of the latter were totally unlike the effeminate Lepcha, or even the Bhooteas whom I had hitherto seen. I was informed that they were Tibetans, the guard of the Sikkim Raja, who had sent a detachment of them to every bridge.

"As Mr. Eden had told me that he did not wish me to stop operations for anything, I informed Lassoo Kajee when he arrived that I had come to cut the bridge. He replied that he had given orders that no one should cross while he was negotiating, but I told him that I could not spare a picket to see that his orders were not disobeyed, nor did I want to have to make a second trip, and that if he wished to recross at the point he could do so on a raft. (Rafts do not take long in making, but require five men, at least, on each side, to work them, and will only take from fifteen to twenty men at a time. A party crossing to annoy us would not be satisfied with a raft as a means of retreat. By a hot pursuit they might all be caught, for the men would not stop to work the raft.)

"Lassoo Kajee at length said that his own men should destroy the stockades and the bridge, and after some more time spent in parleying, and the guards removing

[1] [A large musket or crude cannon, fired from a swivel.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

their baggage and marching out, this was effected.* 175

"We then left, and Lassoo Kajee accompanied us and asked us to send an escort with him to Mr. Eden at Temi, for he was on his way there on the previous evening, and hearing firing ran down again, and falling on the rocks hurt his leg severely. Ascending the ridge towards our camp we saw Mr. Eden and Cheboo Lama coming down the ridge behind us from Temi, he having understood that I was encamped on the river bank. I returned to him with Lassoo Kajee, and we then went to the river bank and talked with some of the people on the opposite side, and it was arranged that those who wished might cross on rafts. Mr. Eden then returned to Temi and I to my camp."

To the above account it is only necessary to add that 648 friendly relations have continued with Sikkim ever since, and that the country, although completely independent, is now the chief refuge of tired Calcutta residents in search of health. Mountaineers, mostly from Europe, are also visiting the country in ever-increasing numbers; and hardly a year now passes without some hitherto virgin peak being climbed. Kinchinjunga, however, has so far resisted every assault, and it seems likely that many years will pass before man is able to overcome its most formidable defences.

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* "On leaving Namchi, the force was divided into three parties, the main column, under Captain Impey, proceeding direct towards the Teesta, and two parties, under Colonel Gawler and Captain Urwin respectively, making long detours to the left and right, with the view of all reuniting again at the Teesta. Captain Impey's column surprised the Sikkimese camp at Temi; they fled, leaving their clothes and weapons, and were pursued down within a few miles of the Teesta. From that time no further attempt at opposition was made; the people were perfectly paralysed at the rapid movements of the troops, whom they perceived to be advancing in several directions at once, by forced marches, through dense forests, and over pathless mountains, traversing in one day distances which even the natives of these hills considered to be three fair marches."—*Extract from Mr. Eden's final report, No. 40, April 8th*, 1861.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

184 the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the ●177 Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful [657] agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

794 In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite 797 the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

797 In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script 212 three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

212 The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

567 —Serving's father—and brought up as his peon. Such Lepcha slaves were either the children of slaves, orphans, or the children of very poor parents. A man would bring up such children and they in turn had to serve him all their lives. If the owner got a child on a female slave the child would be treated as his own, and, if a boy, would inherit, though a smaller portion than the legitimate sons. Slaves could only marry slaves, but otherwise were not distinguished by any special treatment; they received religious attention like ordinary people, and could not be sold or transferred. As in all other cases of emotional relationship among the Lepchas, there was no fixed or expected attitude between masters and slaves; if the master was kind, he was loved like a father. There was a fixed limit to the number of slaves one person could own.

A modification of this situation continues today. If there are children with nobody to look after them, as occasionally occurs, the head of the village, the Mandal, will take them into his household. When they are young they work for the Mandal like a servant, but when they grow up the Mandal arranges a marriage for them and they are then independent; there is at no time any coercion.

iv

177 In some respects the Lepchas are in a different state to most groups hitherto described by anthropologists. A few studies have been made of tribes who have only had contact with other tribes in a similar state of development, but far and away the greater number had already been more or less seriously influenced by Occidental culture, either through colonisation, missionaries, or traders. Sometimes this external modification is taken into account, sometimes practically ignored; in either case the extent and direction of European influence is easily calculable and understandable. The Lepchas on the other hand have not been in any way directly exposed to European colonisation or missionary influence. Except for an occasional tourist to Talung monastery, and the passage of a couple of mountaineering expeditions attempting to climb Kinchenjunga, Europeans have not entered Zongu. A few of the men had seen Europeans prior to our arrival through trading expeditions to Gangtok and Darjeeling, but practically none of the women; they considered us 'amazing,' particularly on account of the colour of our skins and the shape of our noses.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1
Sikkim AK3

L 177

Although they have not been influenced by Europeans the Lepchas have been very greatly influenced and their ways of life much modified by the contact and pressure of their more highly developed neighbours, the Sikkimese, the Nepali, and above all the Tibetans. The extent of this modification is almost incalculable, owing to the fact that there is no precise information available about these neighbouring societies. Tibet is, I suppose, the most written-about country in the world, but none of the literature that I know of is sufficiently detailed to allow comparisons between the Lepchas and any equivalent Tibetan group. Although there are many books on lamaism I have found none which describes the Lhatsun-pa subsect of the Nyingma-pa sect—the variation followed in Lingthem monastery—so that it is impossible to state definitely whether the Lepchas have ignored or considerably modified any aspect or aspects of the religion to which they have been converted. It is as though an investigator were trying to find out about Baptists and could only get information about Christianity in general, with some of the more obvious distinctions between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism noted.

N S [113 114]

With regard to the Sikkimese and non-Gurkha Nepali the situation is in some respects simpler; there is practically no information of any sort available about them. The *Gazeteer of Sikkim* published over forty years ago, contains some generalised statements about the habits of the Sikkimese; and the writings[9] and conversation of Major C. J. Morris who had studied the Gurkha soldiers under his command have given me information on certain points. Despite this slight help it is impossible in nearly every instance to state with any sort of certainty whether a given custom, belief or story is confined to the Lepchas, is shared by them with some other tribe, or has been relatively recently introduced from without. On the whole the only available source of information has been Lepcha tradition. Until other tribes in the same area have been studied (and the fact that Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet are practically closed to Europeans makes such studies in the near future problematical) precise questions of culture contact must remain unanswered.

L 171

L 142

The Lepchas are a mongoloid people, with, it would seem, slightly more pronounced Mongolian features, fairer complexions and greater stature than their present neighbours. Many of the children have carroty or auburn hair, but the hair of adults is always

[9] *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Gurkhas.* By Major C. J. Morris. Delhi 1937.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-bu* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number
291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
[75] the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there. Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 539 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of [177] wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [841] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes [783] any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 [736] his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tamtoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

[431] [177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as
622 uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has
584 arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously
538 pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[431 manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between the two parties.
177] This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and they are expected to support, at any rate in part, the Dorjé Lapoon and the monastery custodian; they also have to give fixed contributions to the feasts which validate the rise in grade of the higher ecclesiastics.

The Lepchas have been converts to lamaism at least one, and probably two centuries, but they have, if I may so express it, sterilised and ignored those aspects of the alien religion which were sharply opposed to their major existing attitudes. They have as it were, swallowed lamaism whole, but excreted the irritating portions. The mythology presented no difficulties; their pantheon was always large and expanding, through the divination of new supernaturals, and further numbers of similar supernaturals were easily accepted; it was understandable that foreigners should know of large numbers of new ones, almost as worthy of worship as the older established ones. The idea of a priesthood in which the priests need training by older priests was also one they already possessed; and that priests should be designated by divination (the horoscope) or by heredity, rather than by the possession of a hereditary spirit was an easy modification of existing attitudes. So too was the idea that the future could be learned by calculation, as well as by dreams and inspiration; the Lepchas have a complete belief in horoscopes and have incorporated them into their lives. Similarly the idea that an essential part of the efficacy of ritual lies in word-for-word repetition was one they already possessed; that, instead of learning by rote, these rituals could be found through the alien art of reading, was to their mind a distinct advantage for lamaism, and the books and those that read them are respected and revered. Similarly mystic contemplation, to expel devils or acquire supernatural powers, had its parallel in the *munchen*, the mystic communion, of the Mun.

The social organisation was a more alien concept; to a certain, though not completely formulated, extent, they have equated the organisation of lamas with that of the family; for a lama to sleep with the wife of an inferior lama is likened to the incest of an elder brother sleeping with his younger brother's wife, though there are no sanctions against such acts; the Dorjé Lapoon are equated with the grandfathers who withdraw from work at the end of their lives to be supported by their sons and grandsons. Nevertheless this parallel does not hold good altogether, and, in so far as they have accepted the social organisation of lamaism the Lepchas have incorporated a new and alien element into their lives. This

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other [144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans 177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of 619] tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with 609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little 136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the 346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the [77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to 712 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
passion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 346 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in [177] 341 close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243
"dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields),
millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method
of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the
Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177]
introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although
Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other
parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is
somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is
more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans,
one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people
who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the
various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But
whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open
to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of
terraces for growing rice under water entails very con-
siderable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157]
indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly
kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly
easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to
increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that
the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat.
Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556]
wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243
this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157
however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from
his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling,
although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.342 Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356 April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249 third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841 plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784 who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249 offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244] for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244] finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249 may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
177 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
778 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

* * * * *

[249] It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
773 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 539 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath. After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 869 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 824 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu, both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but [439 177] metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowadays replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[305
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p.211]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 11

Marriage and General Relations between the Sexes

595 CONTRARY to the reports of earlier travellers, the Lepchas (at least in Jongu) do not practise polyandry, except in very rare circumstances. It is true that their customs permit it; but in actual practice two brothers only share a wife when one is continuously away from home. The only known cases have already been noted in the chapter of personal histories. When polyandry does occur it is always, as in Tibet, what is technically known as adelphic polyandry, that is to say the co-husbands are always brothers; and in discussing the subject the idea that a woman could be married to two men who were not themselves brothers (in the full biological sense) appeared never to have entered the people's heads. Whether it would be possible for a woman to marry more than two brothers at a time I do not know, since a case of this sort has not occurred in Jongu. I imagine that [77] polyandry, such as it is in Jongu, has arisen entirely as a result of contact with Tibetans. It appears to be unknown among Lepchas of other districts, and in discussing the subject the Mandal was definitely ashamed to own that it sometimes occurred. "It is not a good thing," he said; "but it is common among Tibetans, and is sometimes a convenience when one brother is more or less permanently away from home. For this reason I have occasionally recommended, as in the case of Pichi and his brother, that a girl should be married to two brothers."

595 837 A distinction must, however, be drawn between marriage and sexual relations: for while it is unusual for a Lepcha girl to be actually married to more than one man, it is common for her occasionally to sleep with all his younger brothers. The important point to note, however, is that she is not married

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

●177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision 437 of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced 426 a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu 184
families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the 593
Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom [177] ●
of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the 195
conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think 007
that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

R. DE NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ
Kalimpong, Bengal

224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sǎ lí*). It is
411 always made of bamboo, with a string (*sǎ lí grím*) made either of
[283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kŭ ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kǎ fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pŭn hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pǎ kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

ANCIENT FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE LEPCHAS

R. NEBESKY DE WOJKOWITZ

177 The teachings and rites of the Unreformed School of Tibetan Buddhism—nowadays the dominant creed in the Sikkim State—have deeply influenced the beliefs and religious practices of the Lepchas, the main group of aboriginal inhabitants in the Sikkim area. In the course of four centuries, which passed since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism into Sikkim,[1] the original Lepcha traditions became so closely intermingled with ideas and customs of Tibetan origin,[2] that it is now a most difficult task to separate these two groups from each other; this state is still more complicated by the fact that the Lepchas accepted—even if only in a smaller degree—also some of the traditions and customs of the neighbouring Mangars, Limbus,[3] Nepalese and Bhutanese. Among many other customs also ideas concerning the human soul, death and its causes, life after death, etc., as well as the funeral ceremonies themselves were greatly changed under Tibetan influence. Thus the belief in a judgement of the soul by the Lord of the Dead, *Cho ge pă no*[4] (Tb. *Chhos kyi rgyal po*), the migration of the soul through the perils of the *Bar do*[5] (Tb. *Bar do*)—the stage between death and new life—and its rebirth in one of the "six worlds", the punishment of sinners in hell or *Nyó lyang* (Tb. *dMyal ba*), and other well known theories of Tibetan Buddhism are therefore today [764] widely spread among the Lepchas. Oral tradition, however, preserved accounts of the early Lepcha customs and in some of the remote, scarcely accessible valleys of Sikkim the old funeral rites are said to be still observed.

774 According to the old Lepcha belief,[6] the soul[7] is given to a human being by *Fă gróng thíng* and his wife *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the 775 Lepcha race,[8] at the moment of birth. *Nă zóng nyo*, who is also responsible for the conception, determines of which sex the child is going to be. The place from which the soul comes and to which it again returns after a man's death, is called *Rŭm lyang*, "the place of gods". It is believed, that this place lies somewhere in the hills, close to Mount Kanchenjunga.[9] The soul, once it has returned to the *Rŭm lyang*, will stay there with the spirits of the ancestors and not reincarnate in this world again. It also will not have to undergo any punishment for the sins, which the deceased might have committed during his lifetime.

At the time of birth, the soul is believed to be very small, but later on it becomes gradually bigger, keeping pace with the growth of the body. The soul of a living being is called *A pil* and it

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

on the forehead to be presented by the spirit to *Fă gróng thing*, the 764
male ancestor of the Lepchas. A half seer of rice was measured, wrapped in a piece of cloth and placed at the side of the dead, "to serve as food on the road"; while in common life always a heaped measure is taken, in this case the measure is linear.

The corpse was taken out of the house by an opening, which had been made either in a wall or in the floor, as the dead was not supposed to leave his former residence by the door. After the corpse had been brought into the open, it was placed on a bamboo stetcher or—according to Tibetan custom—its legs were bent, the knees drawn towards the chin and then fastened in this position with a band. In the latter case, the body was ultimately placed into an old basket and then carried on the back by anybody strong enough, to the cemetery. The top of the basket was usually covered with a piece of nice, embroidered cloth, which however was not burried along with the dead.

Today, in consequence of Tibetan influence, the dead are burnt on 764
pyres and the ashes immerged in a river. The Sikkimese lamas, who 177
introduced this custom, claim that by burning a dead one certainly avoids his soul becoming the victim of a malignant spirit and thus the old rites of freeing a soul from the power of a demon or the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, which were formerly performed by a *Mŭn*, became unnecessary. Nowadays, the majority of the Lepcha people burn their dead and only in a few very remote places some of the old funeral customs, like the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, are still practised. Mostly however, lamas are called today into the house to conduct the necessary ceremonies and to guide the soul on the way to the other world, as prescribed by the Buddhist religion ; very frequently however also a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* are fetched to say simultaneously some prayers according to Lepcha tradition.

In former times, very elaborate funeral ceremonies were 764
performed and it was customary, to bury the dead in graves. Some details of these ceremonies as well as the form of the grave varied with the different clans and localities.

It seems, that at least three different types of grave were developed by the various Lepcha clans :[14]

(a) The *cók*, a pit-grave with a circular base; the dead was placed in this grave either in a reclining or erect position, his face turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga.

(b) A pit-grave called *cók den*,—with a square base—into which the corpse was put in erect position and facing Kanchenjunga.

(c) An oblong grave, the *cók bli*, in which the dead was buried in a reclining position, turned in the same manner as before,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B. : A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tuk bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

000 9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203 ; Morris, J. : Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276 ; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer : The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H. : Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas' palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

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Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

791 177

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bo* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

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5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5
Tibet AJ1

Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ongge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18] T L 171

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bon, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now. L 177 771 796

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace". L 796 778

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there L 796

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
796 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
776 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
778 The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the
778 Bón religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour
of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it
775 may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly 776 resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an ●177 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon 776 a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child, a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that 787 besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu, 778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical 171 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a 801 tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the 778 Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

described,[12] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses (Fadenkreuze), particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

DAS S. CH. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

SCHLAGINTWEIT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet, Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum [Museum für Völkerkunde] in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in ●177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff [Butterstampfer], baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [578] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama- [177] temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth- 756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 462. The term *Yok* or *Yok-mas* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipal-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

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772 Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living [774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the [773] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence. [772] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological [771] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 125/127. N. 4. p. 358.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 336, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[776] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[778] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[781] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
●[777] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[754] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Nepalese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very elementary and they could by no means compete with the Indian and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [511]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [512]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

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places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 561
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [236]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

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291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw, It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[368] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[17] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

261 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering
152 and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal
● 178 of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food. 224 178

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed. 224 868 [753] 224 [834]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 ___ AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which
311 is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the
556 proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was ' from each according to his ability; to each according to his work ', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X159 *Mrs. Datoop.*

Mrs. Datoop was born at Rangen outside Zongu in 1888. She was married when she was eight to her husband who was then fifteen, but did not sleep with him till five years later. During the intervening period she used to pay him short visits and he paid her longer ones. Her eldest son Pembu was born when she was twenty. She has had in all three sons and two daughters. She considers that having or not having children is entirely a matter of luck and thinks it best that the first child should be a boy.

She occasionally returns to re-visit her brothers; her parents are now dead. According to Kurma, who is distantly related to her, and other people who remember her as a girl, she was the most outstandingly beautiful Lepcha girl they had known. She is distantly connected with the Mandal and Takneum *youmi*.

At the monastery feast which took place on April 20th she was not present; I heard from Pichi that she was unwell and sent her some aspirin; on April 25th she brought me a present of eggs to thank me. She is a very capable, self-assured woman; she makes little pretence at modesty but answers straightforwardly without flirting, as women much older and uglier than her will do. She said for her illness she had called in a Mun, and a pig was sacrificed; also mixed crops and jewels. Jewels can be re-offered as often as necessary; the supernatural does not take anything from them, metaphysically or physically; it is merely gratified at the sight and intention of the offering.

Mrs. Datoop considers that when girls are married away from home young they are unhappy and cry at leaving their parents, but older girls are glad to go to their husbands. Women, she said, have no private cult apart from the ancestral gods to correspond with Pong *rum*; nor is there any part of their lives from which men can be excluded.

[178] Mrs. Datoop weaves very well. She buys the coloured thread and will take about a week to make a full-sized piece. She says she does not weave much now because there is no market for the Lepcha cloth and people won't wear it. She, together with Mrs. Jiroong, who has almost always a spindle in her hand carding wool wherever she goes, are the only two women nowadays who spin at all consistently.

Mrs. Datoop is a woman of very considerable private property—she and her daughters and daughter-in-law have by far the finest

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
● 181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

as good as another. Although the two places are so near in 181
terms of modern travel, in everything else Talung is thousands of years behind, looked at, that is, from what our unhappy machine-age (but actually slave-driven) civilisation is pleased to regard as progress. Talung has neither drains nor electric light; nor, more fortunately, any newspapers; but its inhabitants are happy and, all things considered, contented. A few, a very few, of the people had heard vague and distorted rumours of the Great War (that which did not end war): none, however, so far as I know, had heard of India's new constitution, nor even of King George the Sixth, and the day of the Coronation passed unnoticed, except in so far as it was a fine day and so permitted a full day's work in the fields.

My first view of the Talung was in the spring of 1936, on 114
the way to Everest. We did not enter the valley since our 133
road lay straight through Sikkim to the plains of Tibet, and there was no time for excursions off the route. But from Singhik bungalow one looks right up the valley to Kinchinjunga at its head, one of the most spectacular sights in the whole Himalaya. But on this occasion we did not see the mountain, which was hidden in cloud, and the valley itself looked grim and uninviting, with patches of winter snow still lying in the shadier parts of the higher slopes. When we returned in July the valley was deep in mist and filled with small clouds which looked like floating wads of cotton-wool; but even at this distance many shining patches of emerald cultivation were clearly visible on the steep hillsides, although we could see no villages.

During the previous autumn I had been staying in Nepal, 114
hoping, amongst other things, to get permission to round off my ethnological studies of the people (which I had been pursuing intermittently for years) by a stay of some months in an actual Gurkha village. My proposals proved unacceptable to the Maharaja, who found it impossible to make any exception to the rule, laid down by his predecessors and never once relaxed, by which no European is permitted to

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A 142 group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet—rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists.* The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is 181 their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are 000 supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when

[441] * I have seldom been able to insert my own wrist (which is smaller than the average) into the wooden guard which the Lepcha wears on his left, as a protection against the bow-string: it is a curved ring of wood with an opening at one side, through which, by a little stretching, the wrist is inserted.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when
they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

●181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.

411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 [781] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, 181 who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [347] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning 144 that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet 161 frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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a mixed race calling themselves Kumpa Rong, or Kumpa Lepchas; but they are emigrants from Tibet, having come with the first rajah of Sikkim. These people are more turbulent and bolder than the Lepchas, and retain much of their Tibetan character, and even of that of the very province from which they came; which is north-east of Lhassa, and inhabited by robbers. All the accounts I have received of it agree with those given by MM. Huc and Gabet.

Next to the Lepchas, the most numerous tribe in Sikkim is that of the Limboos (called "Chung" by the Lepchas); they abound also in East Nepal, which they once ruled, inhabiting elevations from 2000 feet to 5000 feet. They are Boodhists, and though not divided into castes, belong to several tribes. All consider themselves as the earliest inhabitants of the Tambur Valley, though they have a tradition of having originally emigrated from Tibet, which their Tartar countenance confirms. They are more slender and sinewy than the Lepchas, and neither plait their hair nor wear ornaments; instead of the ban they use the Nepal curved knife, called "cookree," while for the striped kirtle of the Lepcha are substituted loose cotton trousers and a tight jacket; a sash is worn round the middle, and on the head a small cotton cap. When they ruled over East Nepal, their system was feudal; and on their uniting against the Nepalese, they were with difficulty dislodged from their strongholds. They are said to be equally brave and cruel in battle, putting the old and weak to the sword,

to here: they are all described in various papers by Mr. Hodgson, in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal." The Dhurma people are numerous at Dorjiling; they are often runaways, but invariably prove more industrious settlers than the Lepchas. In the Himalaya the name Bhotan is unknown amongst the Tibetans; it signifies literally (according to Mr. Hodgson) the end of Bhoto, or Tibet, being the eastern extreme of that country. The Lepchas designate Bhotan as Ayeu, or Aieu, as do often the Bhotanese themselves. Sikkim, again, is called Lhop, or Lho', by the Lepchas and Bhotanese.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He [538] is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater importance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture; [183] for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with 781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapōn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Tikneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 592 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two; the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

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tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable 648
infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference 161
of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book 361
would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not made the ~~part of his~~ estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, 657
where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only 184
had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

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the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

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Quite A Number
291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there.
[751] Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
● 184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

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361 villages on the Zongu bank. Excluding the Talung monastery, which is a couple of days' journey from most of the villages, and ●184 which, save for a guardian, is empty except during certain festivals, there are no lamaist monasteries and very few lamas on this bank. [829] The inhabitants of this portion are considered by the people of Zongu to be uncivilised and rude, keeping much more to the habits of their forefathers. For a great deal of their food they rely on hunting and forest produce; their religion is still almost entirely that of the Mun, the lamaist propaganda having reached them very slightly. Owing to the excessively precipitous nature of the ground I never went over to this side of the river; on a few occasions however I saw some of the inhabitants.

361 There are in Zongu itself twenty-two settlements with distinctive names, and across the river eight more; some of these 621 named settlements only consist of two or three houses and they are administratively and emotionally divided into twelve districts. Although it is convenient to speak of villages these settlements have no sort of geographical unity; the houses are either isolated in the fields and forests, or gathered in small groups of three or four; I never saw more than four houses which were close neighbours. Except for the three villages—Lingthem, Gyatong and Tangvoong—which possess a monastery, there is no sort of focal centre to the village, and it would be possible for a casual traveller to pass through quite a large village without being aware of its existence. Lingthem, where I lived, consisted of 33 houses; it is the biggest village on the Talung side of Zongu, and the second biggest in the reserve; the biggest of all is Gyatong, which, with its neighbour Hi, contains 60 houses. From the spur of one hill in Lingthem it is possible to see eight houses at once; I should reckon that there were quite three miles and three thousand feet between the lowest house to the east and the highest house to the west in the village.

621 When three or four houses are grouped together they are usually given a distinctive name. This grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours; people living in adjoining houses may be closely related, or they may be complete strangers, and full brothers may live separated by the full distance of the village.[2] The metaphysical desiderata, described later in this chapter, for the choice of a house site and

[2] For the plan of the houses of Lingthem and their inhabitants, see Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far ●184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest 539 when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

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considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous 601
or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The
boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether 602
he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, [602]
his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 606
'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law, and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be 593
shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite
sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things 184
that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

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593 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's
●184 presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing
[302 the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else,
606] with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

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In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies—or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafêt* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafêt* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafêt* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafêt*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

522 witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him):
831 If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then
842 began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly
[781] and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

● 184 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of
522 sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and
831 adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation
831 with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

jewels of any women in Lingthem—and also very considerable generosity. She practically supports the children of Pargeut, who is distantly related to her husband (they share a common grandmother) and acts more like their mother than their own mother does. The consequence was that she was the only person who had the confidence of Kondé.[5] When Kondé was having her very painful sores dressed Mrs. Datoop would hold and soothe her with an altogether surprising physical gentleness and tact which was unparalleled among other Lepcha women. 159x

No scandal had ever been attached to Mrs. Datoop's name but she had the reputation of being highly sexed and all her potential *oong-op* have taken full advantage of the relationship.

For four generations Mrs. Datoop's family had the peculiarity of rearing their children in cradles. She was so reared and so were all her children, but Pembu her eldest son has not used one for his own child. [184 854]

Pembu.

Pembu was born in 1908 and was weaned at the age of two. As a child he was exceptionally frightened and nervous of strangers: indeed he is to this day. As a young child he was very frequently and seriously ill. When he was older up to the age of ten he used to sulk if reprimanded or punished and threaten to kill himself by jumping into the fire or from a high place. The parents would not try to restrain him; they would say 'If such a child wants to kill himself he can.' Sometimes he would run away for the day to an 'uncle's' but he always came back of his own accord of an evening.

At the age of five[6] he was sent to Gangtok as a servant for the Maharajah; the community has to furnish perpetually two boys for this work. In Gangtok he lived with an 'aunt' Kafermu, a woman who had at that time no children. He used to come home yearly for a holiday. The first year he was there he was very miserable but the second time he returned happily enough. Mrs. Datoop said that all the time he was away or when he was ill she was always very anxious and unhappy. When Pembu was about fifteen he quarrelled with his 'uncle' who complained to the Maharajah and Pembu came home for good. Datoop and his wife were glad to have their son back but regretted the cause of his return. On his

[5] See Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

[6] So he says: but as has been pointed out, Lepchas have no number sense, and I think he was probably older.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

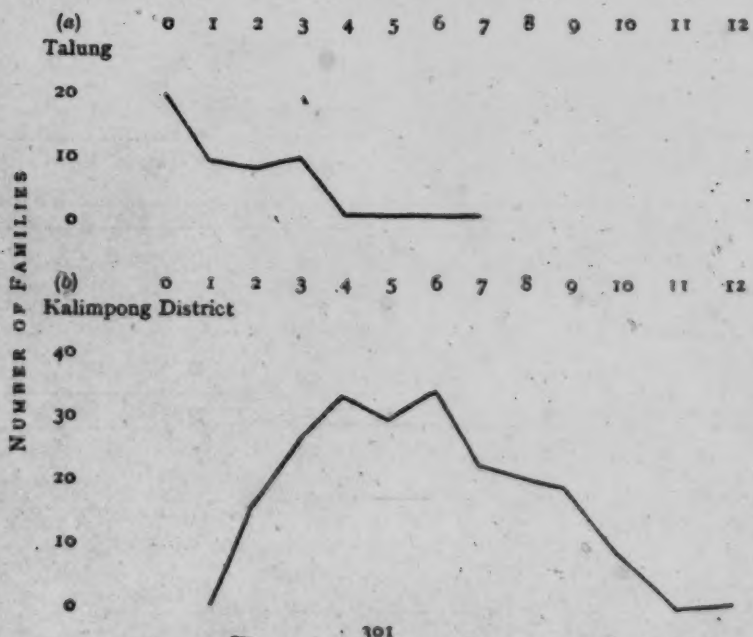
I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX I

162 184 THE charts below show the relative sizes of Lepcha families in (*a*) The Talung Valley, and (*b*) the Kalimpong District of British India. The figures for Kalimpong were very kindly supplied by the Rev. W. M. Scott, Church of Scotland Guild Mission. Figures of childless marriages in this district are unfortunately not available; but Mr. Scott informs me that such a state is rare. I have confined the details of the Talung to families which I believe to be completed. This distinction has not been made in the Kalimpong figures; but for comparative purposes it makes little difference.

Number of children in family.



[p. 302 is blank]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-puteo-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namteeemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil.[1] While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 184

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Na zong nyo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad kbum bongs*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad kbum bongs* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tasa Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *beTsa barung ram ryyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773

1 [i.e., during the funeral rites. —Analys]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sōn-lyang, originally called Sōm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [184] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

23: Benedict

●184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426
thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185]
owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436]
ence what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435]
pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436
with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435]
not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view [185] to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes 439 every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [291] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

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It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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186 The Lepchas are remarkably tolerant. They are perfectly ready to admit the validity for other peoples of habits and customs which for them would be shocking or disgusting. For example the marriage arrangements of the Nepali, and some of the sexual habits of the Tibetans would be horrifying and disastrous if committed by Lepchas; the Lepchas know of these habits, and are inclined to laugh at them; but they do not reproach the Nepali or Tibetans for them, do not try and convince them that they are wrong, and do not fear moral contamination through contact with them. This tolerance is not accompanied however by any feelings of inferiority; the very strong sentiment of fundamental equality among individuals is carried over to a sentiment of fundamental equality between groups. Some people are richer, more industrious or cleverer than their neighbours; similarly the Tibetans are more learned and the Europeans richer than the Lepchas; but since the Lepchas are as learned and as rich as they can be, they do not, I think, feel any fundamental inferiority in comparison with more favoured groups, any more than they do in comparison with more favoured individuals. It is worth remembering in this connection how Gongyop in his prophetic dreams under the possession of Padem *rum* would visit the rulers of neighbouring states and Europeans and would be treated by them as an equal. It is noteworthy that the richer households and the learned lamas who can read do not, [554] except when the lamas are performing their special functions, demand or obtain any special preferential treatment.

[152] This tolerance of the Lepchas can be ascribed I think partly to contentment, and partly to indifference. Straightforward consumption—food, drink and sex—fills the forefront of their desires and aims in life; provided these physical needs are satisfied—and for the majority they are continuously satisfied—the other aspects of life are emotionally of less importance. In their dealings with the supernatural they are particularly tolerant and receptive; it is important to be able to deal with the devils but they have not any deep-set preference for one special method of dealing with them. Completely alien methods will be tried, and, if they prove satisfactory, adopted, however little they may be integrated into their general outlook; thus they have accepted the taboo on menstruating women in the treatment of cardamum, and retained the insistence on virginity in the sacrifices to the people of Mayel, though except in these instances virginity is a meaningless concept and menstruating women suffer under no disabilities. This capacity of accepting

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186 and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The 781 Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

157 Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

[578] This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

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of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until 212
the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu 191
literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can 212
read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks [213]
in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later 114
General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[4] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[4] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Col. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.
Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

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831 522 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 522 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes, though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 537 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed, apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 537 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191] Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these [197] were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534] earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, his wife being four years younger. He had already started his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years, when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told me they were very anxious while he was away from home and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him. Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was still away from home his parents decided that it was time for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi came home the following year he at once made it clear that he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is

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159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

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or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

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192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon
195 this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of
864 marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are
[839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny,
[522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and compassion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitra-
194 rily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

● 192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rôm* or *Rôôm*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tiak* 'the head' is never pronomced *Tuk* or *T'yuk* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-no* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Suk-dum*, 'world', *Sa-nâ* 'a bear', *Mum* or *Mûm* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-bur*' a musk-deer; *Pak-s'ok*, 'a jungle', *Tek-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-na*, *Mûn*, *Hlo*, *Kyeng*, *Sa-bur*, *Puk-suk*, *Tuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced *Raoôm*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 208; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 168). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GAUSWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppâra Jâtaka*. It teems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[104] [4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter *ô*, and *ch* for *c*.

●192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riāk bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha
192 book, the *Tashe sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a
114 Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve
533 many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by
192 the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the
101 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi' Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is
192 the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*Sa-ud-tap*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*p'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-teb*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 275.

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the
●192 mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes
in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes
marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the
choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[551] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the
father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all
the tribal groups (*a-git*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no signi-
ficance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Worm-
wood mother' (*Tak-hel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with
wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which
lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-
sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field
mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam-tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the
Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*)
used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of
Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character,
may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ruh-mii*' and
'*sor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the
fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with
the same meaning as Tibetan '*pö*', (gos) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give
the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to
'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the
world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally
the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in
the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that
some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as
'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting
question will be pursued by philologists.

The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little
776 description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and
the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mang* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 88); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rāam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Ta-shi Tak-bo Rāam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-z*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gāut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those
[153] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-z'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have
[622] developed any organised coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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[1]) loc. cit. 9.

●192 [2]) *Ta-shi* is from *Ta* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tiak* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-tang*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Ta-she*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nang-lyan-no* and *Ka-t'ang-ñ*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sēē-fak*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sākong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *De-lak* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

193 Although fundamentally monosyllabic a great number of Lepcha words have modifying prefixes which are always used in conjunction with the word to give a different sense, so that practically the words have become bisyllables. There are no true polysyllables, though the addition of modifying prefixes and suffixes may produce polysyllables. In bisyllables the stress is usually on the second syllable.

A distinguishing feature of Lepcha is the initial a-, which is added to a great many monosyllables. The existence of this a- appears to depend entirely on euphony; it is always suppressed in compound words and often in speech. Thus *a-nyou* (lady) becomes Narzong-*nyou* (Lady Narzong—a goddess); *a-mu* (mother) becomes *ma-thim* (Big mother) and so on. Euphony is also the reason for a number of varying features in Lepcha speech; thus the plural suffix is *-song*, *-ʒong*, or *-pong* according to the sound of the word to which it is suffixed.

There is no true gender in Lepcha, though a certain number of kinship terms and words definitely implying sex (male and female mammals e.g.) have gender connotations. There is no gender distinction in the third person pronouns.

The stems of words are modified only in the case of the three singular pronouns, which have different stems for the nominative and objective cases.

Nominative	accusative	genitive	dative
(I) go	kasum	kasi	kasum
(thou) Ho	a-dom	a-do	a-dom
(he) Hu	ha-dom	ha-do	hum

In all other nouns and pronouns the genitive is indicated by the suffix *-sa*, ideas of motion by *-ka*, ideas of direction by *-rem* and ideas of action (ablative) by *-nun*. These suffixes are not added if the sense is clear otherwise.

Verbs are not modified to express the idea of number, but there are a great number of suffixes to indicate time and mood. The distinction between nouns and verbs is arbitrary; many nouns can receive verbal suffixes, and verbal nouns can be produced by the addition of *-shang* or *-lung* to the stem.

The sentence order indicates the sense to a great extent. Qualifying genitives precede the noun they qualify; indirect objects precede direct objects, and the operative verb comes at the end of the sentence. As an illustration of Lepcha syntax I am giving part of the first paragraph of the last fable in Appendix V (The story of the blackbird and the crab) with a literal translation.

193 539 *Iaba chahim-fo dyap-ka a-fi a-chu leum-long tam-bik tsaam. Otetka*
Formerly chahim-bird bush-at hither thither fly-doing insect catch. Then

o-re dyap-ka tahi kat amik kleup-kleup lom-am si. Chahim-fo-nun
that-one bush-at crab one eye blinking walk-ing see. Chahim-bird-by

tahi-rem vet "Ho abi shu ʒuk-am go?" Tahi-nun li "Go abi
crab-to ask "Thou there what doing indeed?" Crab-by say "I there

kreedok-nun aʒom dong-am." Otet-ka chahim-fo-nun ta-hi-rem ingʒong
hunger-been food search." That-at chahim-bird-by crab-to ingzong

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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thik-ba : *eunun hanni nyet ingzong thik* . *Eunun mun-dyak-shang hanni*
set-up-would : then they two ingzong set-up. Then meat-pursue-to they

nyet toot-mat . *Nyet-la mon-tseu-mon dyak-shang toot-mat* .
two advice-make. Two indeed boar- pig pursue-to advice-make.

Eunun nyet-la panjok-ka nong. Tahi-nun li " *Ho are pyong-ka ding-o*
Then two-indeed forest-to go. Crab-by say " Thou this path-at walk-do

eunun go-re dyak-lung di-shu." *Otet-ka thung-do tahi-do dyak-lung*
then I indeed follow-ing come-will." Then- at really crab-indeed following

lom pyong-ka loong-lat. Chahim-fo-nun-sa alik tcher tchir tchet liklung
road path-on travel-did. Chahim-bird-by-of cry tcher tchir tchet cry-ing

mon-tseu-mon-rum cher sen-la a-tsang kat kat-aa kup ak . *Otetka*
boar-pig-at catch but hair one only small pull-out. Then

tahi-re sak-lyak " *Ta-tsong-a ho ma-keut-ne : a-long a-do pa-lo*
crab-that angry " Friend-oh thou not-can-not : therefore thee after

dyak-nu pyong-ka go ding-shu."
follow-do path-on I walk-shall."

[p. 496 is blank]

197 and generally deficient linguistic handling of the material can be interpreted only through recourse to the works of these two scholars. The forms cited below are those that appear in the dictionary by Mainwaring and Grünwedel (cited as MG), though the aberrant forms given by Gorer and Stocks are occasionally noted. The Lepcha lists in Campbell and the LSI are of no especial importance (Campbell has evidently confused some of the terms).

193 Lepcha is one of the most unusual, as well as one of the most important, languages in the Tibeto-Burman family. It parallels Tibetan in its well preserved but rather rigid morphology, and exhibits an even more extensive system of prefixes. Initial and final consonants, including initial clusters, have in general been retained, but note final -s > -t, as in hrăt "bone", Tib. rus; nyăt "2", Tib. gnyis. Two sets of vocalic shifts are in operation in Lepcha. The first of these is medial or final a > o, as in klo "to fall", Tibeto-Burman (TB) *kla; zo "to eat", TB *za; ngo "fish", TB *ngya; (a-)tsom "hair", TB *ts'am; lom "road", TB *lam; (a-)rong "horn", TB *rang. The second is medial u (occasionally i) > ă (distinct from a), as in (a-)hrăt "bone", TB *rus; măt "to blow", TB *mut; lăng "stone", TB *lung; (tă-)băk "stomach", TB *buk; tă-răk "6", TB *d-rug; săm "3", TB *g-sum; nyăt "2", TB *g-nis; nyăl ~ nyel "gums", TB *s-nil. The medial ă thus developed tends to become e before final velar consonants, resulting in doublets of the

●193 type rŭng ~ rong "a Lepcha", sŭ-t'ŭng ~ sŭ-t'ong "tiger". The medial ŭ is often retained in composition, e.g. sŭng-mŭt "wind" (mŭt "to blow"), lŭng- rather than lŭng- in names for varieties of stone.

The final dental morphology of Tibet (vide pt. 1) is exactly paralleled in Lepcha, in which final -t stands for -d, and final -n and -m for -n, the -m ordinarily being adjectival. Thus, zo "to eat", (a-)zom "food", zot "to graze", (a-)zot "pasture, food for cattle"; hru "to be hot", (a-)hrum "hot", (a-)hrun "heat"; bu "to carry", (a-)bun "vehicle"; t'yo "to hear", t'yom "hearing" (n.); ya "to know", (a-)yam "knowledge", ŭ̌si "to be", ŭ̌sim "a being" (the -m substantival forms have been selected because of their bearing on the discussion that follows, but -n is the typical suffix here, as in (a-)hrun "heat").

197 In Lepcha we are faced with the problem of Tibetan rather than Indic loan-words. The Lepcha have been in continuous contact with the Tibetans for many centuries, hence we must dissect out several strata of loan-words reflecting both the period of borrowing and the dialect (including the Classical language) from which the borrowing has been made. Many of these loan-words are easily identified, e.g. nya "fish" alongside the native form ngo (supra), but those from an earlier stratum may conform to Lepcha linguistic patterns and consequently pass for native forms. Thus, nok "black" would appear to be the native term cognate with Tib. nag (o < a, vide supra), contrasting with the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX VI

A NOTE ON THE LEPCHA LANGUAGE

104 194 Since I am no philologist, the following notes can only be of very slight value. I am giving them chiefly to account for my principle of transliteration.

Lepcha is said (Linguistic Survey of India) to belong to the Tibetan-Burman group of languages. It is non-pronominalised and not tonal. It is fundamentally a monsyllabic language, as was recognised in the alphabet invented by King Chador. This alphabet consists of 56 signs—the initial vowel a, 37 initial consonants, 10 vowels, indicated by diacritic marks, and 8 final consonants, also indicated by diacritic marks, with the result that each initial consonant with its diacritic marks represents a syllable and most usually a word. The initial consonants are: k, kl, kh, g, gl, ng, ch, chh, j, ny, t, th, d, n, p, pl, ph, f, fl, b, bl, m, ml, ts, tsh, z, y, r, l, h, hl, v, s, sh, w. TH and PH are aspirated (as in English ho*th*ouse) and J is always pronounced as in French *jamais*; otherwise the consonants (with the exception of the initial NG which has no equivalent in Western European languages) are pronounced much the same as in English. The final consonants are k, ng, t, n, p, r, l, m. The chief difficulty in transliteration has been the vowel sounds; the alphabet has ten vowel signs, long and short a, e, i, o, u: but, apart from the nuisance of employing diacritic marks in every word, Lepcha has a greater number of vowel sounds than this, and I have therefore used dipthongs, especially to represent the varied O and U sounds. I have employed the following combinations of letters:

a	as in hat
aa	„ balm, Haag (Dutch)
ah	„ ah! bas (French)
au	„ autumn
e	„ bet
é	„ make, été (French)
ee	„ beat
i	„ pit
i not followed by a consonant	„ sea
o	„ pot
oa	„ boat
oh	„ cocoa
oo	„ book
ou	„ you
u	„ but
u not followed by a consonant	„ Hugh, hue
eu	„ peu (French)
ü	„ über (German)
'	„ petit (French) behave.

212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

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192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rém* or *Rédem*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Reem*'. Again *Tak* or *Tsak* 'the head' is never pronounced *Tak* or *T'yak* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-so* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Sak-dam*, 'world', *Sa-nil* 'a bear', *Mses* or *Mém* 'fresh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung*, a hamlet, '*Sa-bar*' a musk-deer; *Pak-d'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yak-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-mo*, *Mém*, *Hlo*, *Kyung*, *Sa-bur*, *Pak-sok*, *Yuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced '*Raedim*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 268; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 166). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the T'oung-Pao (1896) by Professor GAETKWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppâra Jâtaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter ä, and ch for c.

[104]

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes
581 marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[551] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all the tribal groups (*a-git*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ran-mik*' and '*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*gö*', (goe) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little
776 description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 80); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced 835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is [538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem- [195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual [831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand [832] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are 831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls [195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervous- [152] ness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

831 522 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 522 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes, though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 537 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed, apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 537 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[537] large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of
195 variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison come after'. *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly [198] employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The
[517] favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tiz*, heap of 192 195

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. ●195 Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is 864 another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are [839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, [522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
passion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-bu* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants 197] of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha 797 oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into
Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128
the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101
the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144
all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773
a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173
earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174
character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197]
radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619
important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173
tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

144 174 In the anthropology of the Rong, a two-fold classification is shown : a Mongoloid and a non-Mongoloid element. Our investigation has shown us this two-fold element in the religion and the economy of the Lepchas. From an anthropological standpoint we would like to draw a line of difference between the hunters and the farmers, thus forming two typical groups. The hunters with their hunting religion, sociology and economy represent the tall Rong type and are characterised by the larger physical build, the long small face, the open eye and the long small high nose. The farmers, on the other hand constitute the second group with shorter physiques, broad faces, broad nose, Mongolian eyefold, and prominent cheek bones.

Thus we see that the Rong bear evidences of a mixed culture, and this helps to solve many contradictions concerning them. Some believe that they have connections with the Tibetans. Others say that they wandered from the east along the Burma-Assam mountains. Our own belief is that the hunting component of the Rong are the primitive indigenous inhabitants of the forests of Sikkim. The farmers came from the east and have connections with such people as the Naga, the Lolo and the Miau.

197 174 144 The Rong language belongs to the pure group, that is to say, to the pronounless Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman languages. This bears out the facts that they experienced no Austro-Asiatic influence in the language as the Limbu did. Consequently the Austro-Asiatics cannot be held responsible for the non-Mongoloid element among the Lepchas. The only possibility is that among the pure Tibeto-Burmans and in a wider sense among the Tibeto-Chinese, there is an element purely non-Mongoloid and another that is Mongoloid. The study of the Rong therefore throws light on the Mongoloid problem and shows a formation of the Mongoloids within the Tibeto-Chinese Family (Tibeto-Burman is the large sub-group of this family of languages) and, in a very marked manner, among the farming peoples. This is in perfect agreement with the results of our research in Tibet. I found that the Tibetan Mongoloids are represented among the farming population. The cattle breeding nomads have very few Mongoloid features or none at all. Hence it is that

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of 197
North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in 174
many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was 144
completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs 121
and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the 114
descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. 831
The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, [152]
is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the [161]
cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious

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in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

5. Lepcha

● 197 The Lepcha kinship terminology presents a distinctive set of problems not previously encountered in our review of the field. Our data on the Lepcha, both linguistic and ethnographic, are fairly adequate, and this situation in [101] itself constitutes something of a novelty. Gorer has contributed a remarkable study of Lingthem, a Lepcha village in Zongu (Sikkim) in which Lepcha culture has been preserved as a relatively homogeneous unit. Morris has written a popular account involving some of the same material, and the folklore has been studied by Stocks. Both Gorer and Stocks give lists of kinship terms, which agree in most respects and tend to supplement one another. On the ethnographic side, Gorer gives us a complete picture of clan organization, marriage regulations, kin behaviour, etc. Stocks' article includes scattered notes on Lepcha customs, and marriageable and non-marriageable kin are indicated as such in her list of terms, but this material includes a number of obvious errors and is not entirely trustworthy; Gorer remarks (p. 41) that her notes "correspond in practically no particular with my observations". On the linguistic side, the grammar and dictionary of Mainwaring, the latter carefully edited by Grünwedel, supply a rich storehouse of raw material, perhaps as important a single source as any in this general field. Gorer's unkind remarks (pp. 39 sq.) can scarcely be justified, especially in view of the fact that his own incorrect forms

197 and generally deficient linguistic handling of the material can be interpreted only through recourse to the works of these two scholars. The forms cited below are those that appear in the dictionary by Mainwaring and Grünwedel (cited as MG), though the aberrant forms given by Gorer and Stocks are occasionally noted. The Lepcha lists in Campbell and the LSI are of no especial importance (Campbell has evidently confused some of the terms).

193 Lepcha is one of the most unusual, as well as one of the most important, languages in the Tibeto-Burman family. It parallels Tibetan in its well preserved but rather rigid morphology, and exhibits an even more extensive system of prefixes. Initial and final consonants, including initial clusters, have in general been retained, but note final -s > -t, as in hrăt "bone", Tib. rus; nyăt "2", Tib. gnyis. Two sets of vocalic shifts are in operation in Lepcha. The first of these is medial or final a > o, as in klo "to fall", Tibeto-Burman (TB) *kla; zo "to eat", TB *za; ngo "fish", TB *ngya; (a-)tsom "hair", TB *ts'am; lom "road", TB *lam; (a-)rong "horn", TB *rang. The second is medial u (occasionally i) > ă (distinct from a), as in (a-)hrăt "bone", TB *rus; măt "to blow", TB *mut; lăng "stone", TB *lung; (tă-)băk "stomach", TB *buk; tă-răk "6", TB *d-rug; săm "3", TB *g-sum; nyăt "2", TB *g-nis; nyăl ~ nyel "gums", TB *s-nil. The medial ă thus developed tends to become e before final velar consonants, resulting in doublets of the

193 type ráng ~ rong "a Lepcha", sǎ-t'ǎng ~ sǎ-t'ong "tiger". The medial ǔ is often retained in composition, e.g. sǔng-mǔt "wind" (mǔt "to blow"), lǔng- rather than lǎng- in names for varieties of stone.

The final dental morphology of Tibet (vide pt. 1) is exactly paralleled in Lepcha, in which final -t stands for -d, and final -n and -m for -n, the -m ordinarily being adjectival. Thus, so "to eat", (a-)som "food", sot "to graze", (a-)sot "pasture, food for cattle"; hru "to be hot", (a-)hrum "hot", (a-)hrun "heat"; bu "to carry", (a-)bun "vehicle"; t'yo "to hear", t'yom "hearing" (n.); ya "to know", (a-)yam "knowledge", ǎi "to be", ǎim "a being" (the -m substantival forms have been selected because of their bearing on the discussion that follows, but -n is the typical suffix here, as in (a-)hrun "heat").

197 In Lepcha we are faced with the problem of Tibetan rather than Indic loan-words. The Lepcha have been in continuous contact with the Tibetans for many centuries, hence we must dissect out several strata of loan-words reflecting both the period of borrowing and the dialect (including the Classical language) from which the borrowing has been made. Many of these loan-words are easily identified, e.g. nya "fish" alongside the native form ngo (supra), but those from an earlier stratum may conform to Lepcha linguistic patterns and consequently pass for native forms. Thus, nok "black" would appear to be the native term cognate with Tib. nag (o < a, vide supra), contrasting with the

197 borrowed form nak as found in nak-c'o "the black arts" (Tib. nag-p'yogs) and other obviously recent loan-words. Yet the true native term is rather (a-)tyang "black, dark", cognate with Tsangla tsang, Kachin cang "black" (Lepcha has medial a, probably from TB *ā, in a number of important roots). So also nok "ink" from Tib. snag, unquestionably a loan-word but showing the o < a shift (if truly cognate the form would be

601 *nyok rather than nok, vide infra). It is apparent, then, that the general semantic setting as well as the phonological development of a given Lepcha word must be considered in making our identification of it as native or Tibetan. That this is especially true of kinship terminology will be shown in the annotations below.

Lepcha Consanguineal Terms

		(a-)zo gGF	
nyi-kung gM		t'i-kung gF	
(a-)mo M		(a-)bo F	
(a-)mo tim(-bo) FoSi,MoSi		(a-)bo tim(-bo) FoB	
(a-)mo cum(-bo) MySi		(a-)bo cum(-bo) FyB	
(a-)nyu FSi,MSi		(a-)ku FB (a-)ǰong MB	
(a-)nom oSi,pxC		(a-)nŭm oB,pxC	
	yeng ySb,pxC	nu yB	
	(a-)kŭp Ch		
	{nŭm-kŭp nom-kŭp} SbCh		
	{kŭp-zong (a-)zom} gCh		
	nyi-t'i ggCh		

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[537] 195 large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison come after'. *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly [198] employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The [517] favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847
are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
Fields.

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, 201 and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things [231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not 157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a [766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They [515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People [854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no 841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the 152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans 515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy, 515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
● [201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopōn and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[788 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopōn stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them.

[1] [ie. The second Dorje-Lopōn and Tapeor. -- Analyst]

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[368] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 412 The most important of the implements used for farming is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[177] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 174 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

farming must already have been effected by the Rong in very early times. 205 174

Gorer believes that the Rong were hunters about three hundred years ago, and that they carried on a little farming with dry rice and millet and kept a few cattle. When the Bhutanese and the Nepalese overran the land, the Lepchas withdrew into the forests, where they gave up farming and lived solely by hunting. When peace was restored they again took up to farming.[100]

(*l*) The Anthropological classification of the Rong

There are two basic types among the Lepchas which have to be clearly differentiated. The one with the long small face, the high forehead, the high narrow nose, and the well-defined eye-brow prominences; the eye is mostly without the Mongolian fold (if the upper lid droops it does not cover the inner corner of the eye). The face is also well-modelled; the cheek bones are not very prominent. The form of the head is mesocephalic or dolichocephalic. These people are taller and somewhat above the average height. The colour of the skin is light yellow. (Fig. 45). 142 141

The other type has a wide short face, a wide low forehead, well-defined supra-orbital ridges, a broad nose with depressed root and cheek bones that are somewhat more prominent. The eye often shows the Mongolian fold. The lips are thin, the shape of the head is brachycephalic, and the colour of the skin light yellow. Both the types have a slight growth of beard and a scanty growth of hair all over the body. The Mongolian spot occurs among most of the children of both types. The Lepchas call the spot "ri-om" and say that children without the spot are delicate. (Fig. 46)

The Rong have well-proportioned bodies. The muscles of the thigh and calves are particularly well-formed because of the fact that they are tireless mountain climbers. On the average however, the Rong are more lightly built than the neighbouring people. The women have very finely cut features.

100. op. cit. p. 110.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until 212
the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu 191
literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures
and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can 212
read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks [213]
in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later 114
General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[4] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[4] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Col. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.

Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised 351 level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) 794 which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated. Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *ptso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
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from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
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I only learned this later) the people were merely away
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decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
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him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
● [212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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755
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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
212
142
291

Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

778
249

A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[Facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

carrying the younger to slavery, and killing on the march such captives as are unable to proceed. Many enlist at [702] Dorjiling, which the Lepchas never do; and the rajah of Nepal employs them in his army, where, however, they seldom obtain promotion, this being reserved for soldiers of Hindoo tribes. Latterly Jung Bahadur levied a force of 6000 of them, who were cantoned at Katmandoo, where the cholera breaking out, carried off some hundreds, causing many families who dreaded conscription to flock to Dorjiling. Their habits are so similar to those of the Lepchas, that they constantly intermarry. They mourn, burn, and bury their dead, raising a mound over the corpse, erecting a headstone, and surrounding the grave with a little paling of sticks; they then scatter eggs and pebbles over the ground. In these offices the Bijoos of the Lepchas is employed, but the Limboo has also priests of his own, called "Phedangbos," who belong to rather a higher order than the Bijooas. They officiate at marriages, when a cock is put into the bridegroom's hands, and a hen into those of the bride; the Phedangbo then cuts off the birds' heads, when the blood is caught on a plantain leaf, and runs into pools from which omens are drawn. At death, guns are fired, to announce to the gods the departure of the spirit; of these there are many, having one supreme head, and to them offerings and sacrifices are made. They do not believe in metempsychosis.

The Limboo language is totally different from the Lepcha, with less of the *z* in it, and more labials and palatals, hence more pleasing. Its affinities I do not know; it has [703] no peculiar written character, the Lepcha or Nagri being used. Dr. Campbell, from whom I have derived most of my information respecting these people, was informed,*

* See "Dorjiling Guide," p. 89. Calcutta, 1845.

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

●212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Asam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]. They are especially near the 'Arleng' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pó* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Forbes, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all. 114 174

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapche' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2], because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mó-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Asam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Talaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu. 101

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3], is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the juxta-position of these 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4] by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He 212 114

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[1] From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nangas*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Nagas* is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2] It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ,Welsh' or ,the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ,Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. Taylor's „Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3] The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikkim'.

[4] This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. Paul (pp. 1—30, where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1686, died 1717 A. D.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

212 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly
114 represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitra-
194 rily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rām* or *Rāūm*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tiak* 'the head' is never pronounced *Tuk* or *T'yuk* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-no* 'a king'. Similarly *Kup* 'young', *Suk-dum*, 'world', *Sa-ni* 'a bear', *Mawa* or *Mōa* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-bar*' a musk-deer; *Pak-a'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yak-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-mu*, *Mōn*, *Hlo*, *Kyong*, *Sa-bur*, *Puk-sōk*. *Yuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced '*Raedim*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 238; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 166). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GRÜNWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Sapplira Jātaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[104] [4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter ā, and ok for o.

ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE FOREGOING SONGS.

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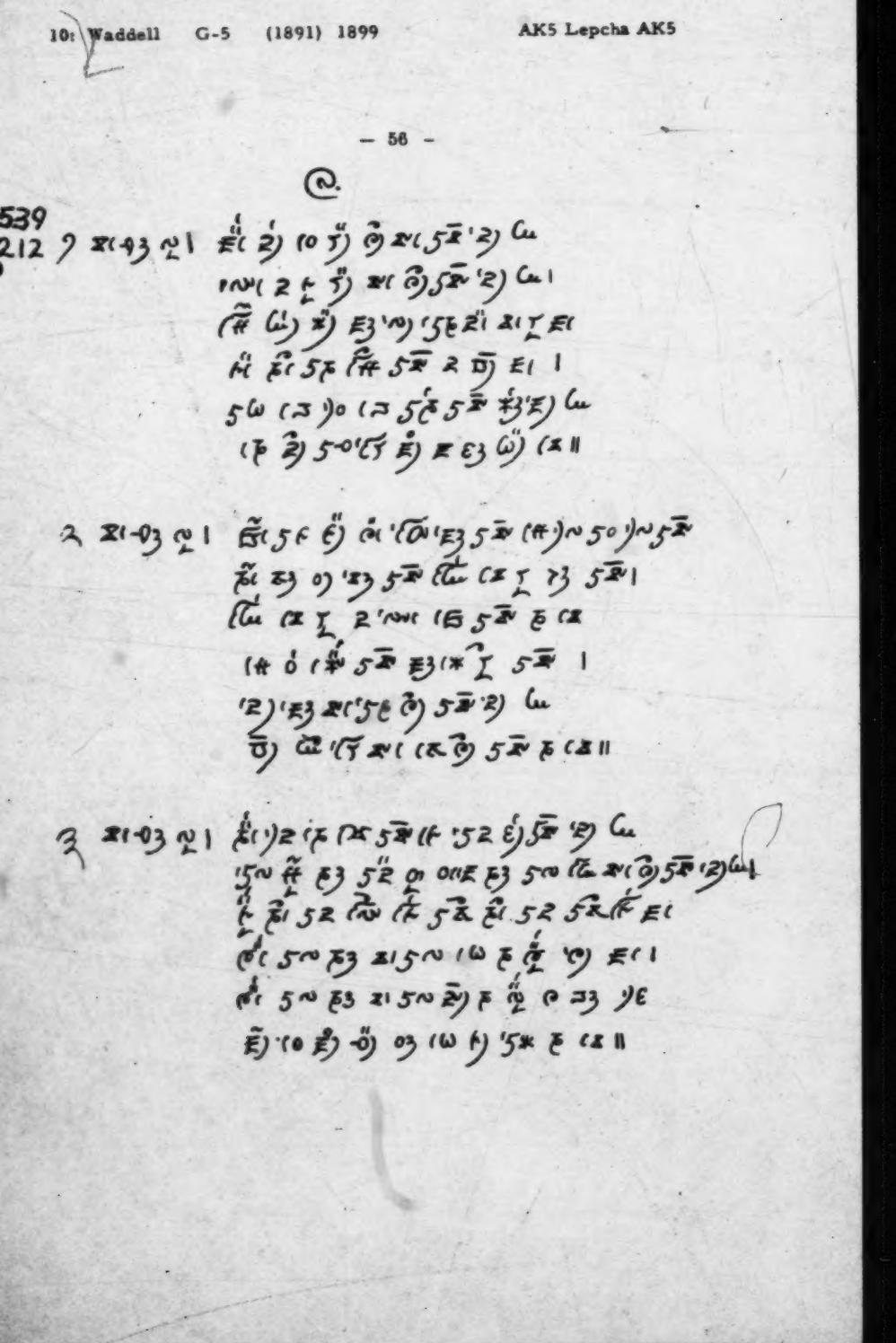

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of literacy is absolutely essential for the practising lama, and until the Lepchas could be taught Tibetan it was necessary that translations of the scriptures should be available in their own tongue. All the existing Lepcha manuscripts of which I have heard are translations of the Tibetan lamaist scriptures; it is said that some specifically Lepcha compilations of mythology and anecdote have been made and possibly some may have escaped the destructive zeal of fanatical lamas. In Lingthem only one very old lama possessed or could read a Lepcha book.

Nowadays religious instruction is given in Tibetan. In Zongu literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of Tibetan scriptures and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at a considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions. Some of the lamas of Lingthem read the Tibetan scriptures with ease and even fluency; others appeared to me to have learned portions of the scriptures by heart and to know when to turn over the pages; but I was never able to prove this. Tibetan books are printed from wooden blocks in long narrow rectangular pages; to learn to read the pupil gets by heart the contents of one page at a time, only passing on to the next when he has completely mastered and is able to recite the first.

During the second half of the last century one Colonel (later General) G. G. Mainwaring took the Lepchas and their language under his special protection. General Mainwaring was, judging by his literary remains,[4] so perfect a type of the eccentric Indian officer who supports freak religions and fantastic prophecies derived from the pyramids that he seems almost to be an invented caricature. After profound thought General Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendants of our first parents, but that—as could be simply shown by a device of the General's called the Power of Letters—Lepcha was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. Of the people and the language he writes:

'It is impossible that a people with language so comprehensive; with manners, though primitive, so superior, as to entitle

[4] *A Lepcha Grammar*, by Col. G. G. Mainwaring. Calcutta 1876.

Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, compiled by the late General G. Mainwaring, revised and completed by Albert Grünwedel, Berlin, printed and published by order of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Berlin 1898.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number. It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen, which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks' feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep, was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).' 539 171

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West! 755 753 [214]

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755 171

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

242 much a prayer is said (usually by an experienced layman) after each sowing. It is arguable that more intensive cultivation would not result in a bigger yield per hour of work; and the continuous change of ground, only possible with a light population, prevents erosion and soil exhaustion. The accompanying table shows schematically the work of the Lepcha agricultural year.

LEPCHA AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR
(for the Talung valley)

221 805 (*Note*: The Tibetan year begins in February, and the first of the Tibetan month falls on about the tenth of the English. Consequently 'February', e.g. should be interpreted as 'February 10th to March 10th.')

TANGBU (February).	Clear the ground and finish sowing buckwheat. This and the two preceding months are the period of intense cold when poor old people may die for lack of warmth.
NIBU (March)	Finish clearing ground and sow dry paddy in temporary fields; sow maize and early millet in valley. Weed cardamum in flower and strike new plants. This and the following month is the time of rain and hail-storms.
SUMGU (April)	Harvest barley and wheat. Clear ground for main-crop millet. Weed cardamum again round new-formed fruit.
ZIBU (May)	Harvest buckwheat. Sow maincrop millet. Sow maize in 'garden' burning the wheat straw for fertilising. This and the three following months are the period of constant rain and heat. Head-coverings are necessary.
NAPU (June)	Plant wet rice. Weed dry rice. This is the leanest month when people may go hungry. In this and the following month is the greatest infantile mortality, through diarrhoea and dysentery.
TIKPU (July)	Harvest earliest millets in valley. Weed maincrop millet.
DENGBU (August)	Harvest earliest variety of wet rice. Make a shed to dry cardamum fruit. Make a small sowing of buckwheat for seed.
GEBU (September)	Harvest dry rice. The women start harvesting the millet, the men the cardamum. This and the two following months are relatively dry.
GOOBU (October)	Cardamum picking continues. Wet rice is harvested. Barley, wheat and onions are sown in the 'garden'.
CHOOPU (November)	The seed-buckwheat is harvested. Cardamum is sold. This and the next two months are the prosperous period, the time of little work and much feasting, of shopping and trading expeditions. Most marriages are celebrated now.
CHUCHIKPU (December)	Taxes are paid. The harvested temporary fields must be made ready for buckwheat.
CHUNIPU (January).	The big sowing of buckwheat.

[539] En Ye!

Mo-tun-chi Ñoñ hap ñun nen bin	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lü-nen po-bong yit duk hun se	We were made along with the *so-la-nen* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsam* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [2])
Ar-tsam po-mig duk hun se po-s'or boñ	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk hung se Ñoñ hap gum yoñ s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

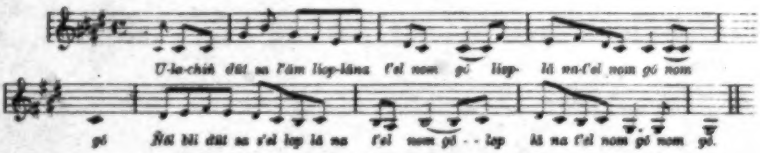
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the [574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing [273] behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [3]).

III.

U-la-duñ dût.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duñ dût se-l'âm lip-lü na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [4]), like an unopened bud [5]).
Ñü-bli dût se-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a supple shuttle [6]).
Soñ la lyen s'u fah-ruñ „ „ „ „	Like a whirling spindle [7]).
Ka-fer ki-run nañ nüñ lip-lü diñ mil nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'or la tañ-lut se-s'el „ „ „ „ „	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tak-gum diñ-mil nom „ „ „ „ „	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bil-la lip-lü na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mek fo s'ot nañ nüñ „ „ „ „	Like a sorrowing *S'uñ* bird.
Sik la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	Like a loudly lamenting Takmek bird.
Lok la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	I feel very sad!

IV.

The Pangs of Love.

Chin-cha-se tak-sok buk po ma t'ên na-pok	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-cha-se* yam [9])
Kyok-rin-le lat dak ñ-tim-bu lit nen-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyok-rin-le* heart.

[824] [231] [415]

[1]) *Po-sher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Pou*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, Nees & Arnott). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine Coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poñ-t'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poñ-kia*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *kip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapient*).

[5]) *Ñoñ-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Ism-s'u*.

[7]) *Tak-sok-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

[222]

539 *Fŏa-rŏa-lĭŏ kur-pok go-ma zom-ma-yuŏ*
Ar-tan-tsum bĭt dok ŏ-tim-bu lĭt nom-mĭ
Chuŏ-ao-li ka-aok go ma-f'ăn na-yuŏ
Mar-ko bŏu wŏ ŏot ŏ-tim-bu lĭt nom-mĭ.

Though I ate not the *fŏa-rŏa-lĭŏ* wild plantain.[1])
I feel great pain in my *ar-tan-tsum* liver.
Though I took not the wild *chan-ao-li* yam[2])
I am burned up with a fiery thirst.

V.

Ee Ye!
Sĭk-la ma-run-ne loŏ la ma-run-ne
Mĭt tan-gum nom-f'om dŏ-par-ko noŏ-ko
Kyoŏ-ra-lo lat ŏ-re re fari-lĭ go
Ar-tan-tsum byat lo-kuŏ kyĭŏ la go ma.

Ee Ye!
Go-roŏ ko! Sĭk la ma-run-ne
S'er f'ao-di zuk-bo rum ko nun s
Om kĭŏ-tsum s'u noŏ-nen go dun bo che
Sak-la ma-run-ne loŏ la ma-run-ne

Ee Ye!
S'i-mŏn-mi kap gi-par-roŏ ŏin kap ao-lo noŏ
Ki-dak tsum-pa-non zom-roŏ
S'u mŏi noŏ dunŏ go yoŏ s'ŏ dĭŏ ma ŏ
Sĭk la ma-run-ne loŏ la ma-run ne.

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
Listen O maidens behind! (respected) as *dŏ-par* great-mothers
I feel this *kyoŏ-ra-lo* heart (*of* mine)
Is pierced through and my *ar-tan-tsum* breath[3]) is chill.

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
O Head-Father spirit, creator of *S'er* fate.
Tell me what is my *Om* destiny!
I feel very sad!

Ee Ye!
I (am only) a *S'i-ruan-mi* boy,
A *gi-par-roŏ* youngster. I implore you humbly standing
Why have you given me this *ao-lo-non* and *tsum-la-non* sorrow
I feel very sad.

VI.

Fok-tsum-non ma yun
Kĭŏ tsum noŏ ma s'em
Mi-f'ĭk-mo s'u pŏŏ
Kĭŏ tsum noŏ ma lan
Duk-mar-bŏu som f'at
Tuk-ta-li Nŏ-zoŏ ko.
Zŭm-ao-li Fa-duŏ f'ĭŏ
A-yu ru-ma ŏ
Kyoŏ-ra-lo lat dok
Ar-s'i ban s'u yĭ
Z'em ta-f'i s'u yĭ
Gi-par-sim s'u da.

O you with the flowing hair!
O fair one with the neat parted hair!
Why have you *mi-f'ik mo* charmed me so?
You fair one with the neat parted hair!
O old great grandmother *Tuk-ta-li Nŏ-zoŏ*
You *duk-mar-bŏu* joiner of our breath
O old great grandfather *Zum-ao-li* lord *Fa-duŏ*
Praise be to your names!
(But) why have you *ar-s'i-ban* created me?
Why have you *s'em-ta-mi* created me?
Why have you *gi-par-sim* created me?
To suffer such heart-breaking sorrow?

The following seems a figurative declaration of affection by a youth of the valley the Singbali-river towards a girl of the Kirungpata-glen.

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[1]) *Kar-pok* is the wild plantain (*Musa* sp.). It is full of large sharply jagged and irritant seeds. The cultivated plantain *Kar-duŏ* is seedless.

[2]) *Ka-aok* is a hairy round wild yam of large size, which grows near the surface of the ground, but its tubers cause intense thirst. Other wild yams found in Sikhim are *Sa-um-buk*, *Sak-pol-buk* and *Sa-li-buk* (?) probably the *Chuŏ-ao-li* of text.

[3]) Literally „Lungs".

[222] [137]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples 771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a 793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were 824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the 825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even 222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will 261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water [272] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another 252 root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, 262 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [136]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Nepalese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very elementary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which
311 is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the
556 proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

R. DE NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ
Kalimpong, Bengal

224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

For catching jungle fowl, hares and other small game, a spring bow (*ver sak*) is set in the following way. A short piece of wood, with a broad notch in its upper part, is stuck firmly into the ground and then another piece of wood, which has a notch loosely fitting into that of the first piece, is placed into it in a horizontal position. A bamboo shoot or a small tree is bent, a string attached to it and, lastly, a sling is made, which is led over the upper, horizontal arm of the previously described device. The bait is placed on the sling and by pulling at it, the horizontal arm slips out of the vertical piece and thus releases the trap. — The same kind of trap, only in a larger size, is used for catching deer. 223 224

Another kind of sling trap used for catching jungle fowl is the so-called *ma ló*. It consists of a row of slings, made of the hair of a horse-tail, which are suspended from a fixed horizontal beam. 223

A Lepcha dead-fall (*kóp*) for killing jungle fowl, is constructed as follows: A string is fastened to a tree and then led over a flat stone; the string ends in a short bamboo stick, to which a bait is fastened. Then another short string is bent into a loop and its two ends are firmly fastened to the ground at the bottom of the stone and the bamboo stick with the bait is then pulled through the loop, formed by the lower string, the tension of both strings holding the stone in a tilted position. A slight movement of the bamboo piece causes the upper sling to slip out of the loop and the stone thus drops on top of the animal.

Another kind of dead-fall, which has to be set on a jungle path, is the so-called *shil*. It consists of a heavy wooden beam, supported on one side by a lightly placed stick, which might be easily knocked down by an animal running along the path.

For catching birds, a small grill is made out of a few bamboo sticks, and is afterwards smeared with tarry birdlime (*a' yók*), obtained from a *Ficus* tree. The birdlime is usually kept ready for use in a small bamboo container (*po tek*). The grill, already smeared with bird lime, is known as *a' yók pün grim*; it is placed over [314 824]

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

223 troughs, filled with water, near springs, where birds come to drink or on the tops of trees.

224 An automatic spear trap (*sa lak*) is used for killing deer and sometimes a number of such traps are set, should a man-eating tiger roam around a settlement. In this case, people are warned to stay in the houses until the hunters have removed the traps again. The spear-traps are set with great care and at a certain hight, the hunter calculating the size of the tiger from its footprints. The spear-trap is made as follows: A huge bamboo tube is cut lengthwise and firmly fixed at a certain height and position with the help of several bamboo supports. Then a long piece of bamboo is fastened horizontally above the ground — at the same height of the bamboo tube — and bent strongly backwards until one end of it reaches the bamboo tube, where it is then held in its spanned position by means of a simple cock. A string is fastened to the latter and stretched low across the jungle path. At last a strong piece of bamboo, the front-end of which has been cut to a sharp point and usually poisoned, is placed in the tube as a missile. — Usually another string, also connected with the cock, is spanned breast high and further away in the direction from which a man might approach. If somebody then stumbles unaware into the trap, the missile is released beforehand without causing harm.

A small cross-bow trap (*sŭ lak tyŭk*) is used for killing rats. It consists of a miniature cross-bow which aims into a bamboo tube, closed at its further end. The bow-string is cocked over one end of a movable bamboo stick, the other end of it, to which some bait is attached, reaching into the bamboo tube. By a slight pull at the bait, the stick, which holds back the bow-string, is moved and the arrow thus released. — It may be mentioned in this connection that poisoned food is also often laid out for killing rats, mice and other animals, who harm the crops.

225 Jungle fowl is sometimes caught with the help of a tent-like net.
226 Its top is loosely hung up on a branch and its sides are fastened to the ground. On one side only, an entrance is left by lifting the flap

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223 286
bait on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself in a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits the stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or he simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from the branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224
by a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the cooperation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pitfalls (*tüng hóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made of a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824]
constructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the latter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino would habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters claim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and easily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door was constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages with trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys who cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of hunters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a cliff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the wild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the spikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a line of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas fear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and become a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226
to a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

261 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering
152 and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the
178 less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food. 224 178

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed. 224 868 [753] 224 [834]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. [756] My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with 771 harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number 795 of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible 241 that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun cere- [224] monies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination [562] against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to [782] the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1] 241 785

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

24 784 living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

241' The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

iii

224 782 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hunter crouching behind and speaking very slowly and softly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken that no woman sees the animal's head; if she did the hunter would have no success in future.

To know how to sacrifice to Pong *rum* it is necessary to learn how to, and to receive *loong*; for this purpose the novice goes to anybody who knows—maybe his father or some other relation or a friend—taking with him *chi* and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee. Great care must be taken that no woman is present at this time. When the older man sees the gifts he enquires what they are for and is told it is to learn how to sacrifice. The older man then arranges the sacrifice and tells the neophyte to sit with his back to him: he must not look but must listen most attentively. After that the neophyte on the next suitable occasion will make the sacrifice; the instructor will be near him and if he makes a mistake will nudge him, whereat the sacrifice must be stopped short. Subsequently the neophyte will take another lesson, continuing until he is word perfect and has received his *loong* and can sacrifice on his own.

A person who has once been to the communal sacrifice to Pong *rum* should continue to do so all his life; he may, however, give it up, in which case he is liable to be troubled with poltergeist manifestations by Pong *rum*, who anyhow if he is displeased with a hunter will pursue him whistling, and the thump of heavy stones falling will be heard, though no stones are seen to fall. It is even preferable for hunters' children to continue the ritual.

Kurma used to hunt but does so no longer and has given up going to the sacrifice to Pong *rum*; for he is afraid that should he go and then not hunt he would become mad. As things are he is somewhat persecuted by Pong *rum*; he describes these persecutions with the greatest detail and indifference. He says quite freely that he does not care a bit.

Near his house is an orange tree and some time ago on a moonlight night he heard distinctly the sound of big stones being thrown under this tree; but there was nothing to be seen so he knew it was Pong *rum*; he therefore returned to the house, lit some incense leaves and butter and came out and offered it to the god saying 'Please forgive us; we have no intention of hunting'.

'Only a month ago when some friends were in my house with me drinking *chi* I heard my dog which was tethered some way

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 782 from the house barking furiously; I went outside expecting that somebody was passing but I could see no-one. When I returned to the house we heard the dog whimper and then stop; we went outside and found its dead body in front of the house. Of course Pong *rum* had killed it, but I do not care: I just offered the gods some incense.'

Kurma's younger brother used to hunt but never learnt how to make the sacrifice properly; Kurma used to do it for him. But on one occasion when he was away, his maternal uncle sacrificed and instead of making the offering to Pong *rum* made it to his own god. This is one of the reasons given for this young man's subsequent violent death in the forest.[4]

Kurma's family are now very unlucky hunters and the reason is as follows. Three generations ago their forefather was a very lucky hunter who worshipped Shing *rum* (the wife of Pong *rum*). At that time the Mandal of the village was an unlucky hunter; he worshipped Pong *rum*. Now these two agreed to change gods. To do this they killed an ox and then drank three cups of *chi* mixed with the blood, with dabs of butter on the side, for this constitutes the most binding oath. From that day the descendants of the Mandal were always successful hunters while the descendants of the other man were always unlucky. Pong *rum* and Shing *rum* are naturally exclusively male gods.

Before drinking *chi* (in the case of lamas also before drinking tea) or eating food a little is offered to the gods. If the food is domestic in origin it is thrown away from the eater, if of wild origin towards the eater, that is backwards. These offerings are tiny and quite automatic; the 'straw' is lifted from the *chi* and flicked outwards; a few crumbs are dropped from the first handful. No form of prayer accompanies these offerings.

[4] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 402–403.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

replied that since the woman had herself come and implored /159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible.
A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to
give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to
be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies.
When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a
load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain.
These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he
said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more
than this he would not say. The same evening, when they 159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother 762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some
minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about
being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly
raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into
the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and
then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself
with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand
and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near.
His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand
and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him
to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried
to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his
tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly
clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He
shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some
wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [757]
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together
and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this
time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a
few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell /159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a
man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time,
but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since 159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291
159

On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chötembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
273
415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [368]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the annual sacrifice to Pong Rum, even though he hunts no more. To neglect this duty would be to run the risk of being haunted by the god, who might cause one to drown oneself in the river. Karma no longer hunts, but when he gave it up he forgot all about the annual ceremony. One night, however, Pong Rum came and threw stones at an orange tree outside his house. It was a misty half-moonlight night and he could not see very clearly; but he could hear the stones come whizzing through the air. He went outside, lighted some incense, and put a little butter beside it. "Forgive me," he said to the Rum; "for I will hunt no more." He then went inside and lay down, thinking the god was satisfied.

About a month after this he was sitting quietly drinking one night when his dog suddenly started to bark. He went outside to investigate, but could see nothing; it was a wild, dark night. He went indoors again, but after a little while the dog again started to bark and then whined in a most peculiar way: Karma thought that perhaps someone had hit it. He went outside again; but again there was nothing to see. He walked all round the house, and then he suddenly noticed that his dog was lying dead; there were no marks on its body. It was the Pong Rum come again. Karma now does the annual ceremony regularly, and has not since been troubled.

Here is another hunting story. Some three generations ago there was once a Mandal and his friend. The Mandal's family guardian was a male god, that of his friend a female. The Mandal was exceedingly fond of hunting, but he never had any luck, whereas the other man never came home with an empty bag. The Mandal persuaded his friend to change gods with him, as he thought this might change his luck; to this his friend agreed. They sacrificed an ox, and placed it with some *chi*, butter, and grain. Then they each took their drinking bowls, smeared some butter round the rim, and made a libation to their respective gods, saying at the same time, "May my Rum be yours and yours mine." They did

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
[439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177] days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

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224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

411 The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sä li*). It is
[283] always made of bamboo, with a string (*sä li grím*) made either of the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kü ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kä fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pün hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pä ki*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

the poison is prepared only shortly before the hunt begins. The root is ground between two stones and then some water is added to form a thick paste. Lepcha hunters are very careful in handling aconite and should their hands show even a small cut caused during house or field work, they will refrain from using the poison on this day. Should an animal be killed by a poisoned missile, the hunter will wait until the body of the prey has grown cold — »the poison returns then from the heart to the wound« — and afterwards that part of the body, which had been wounded is cut off and thrown away.

Hunting weapons

Four different kinds of bow are used by the Lepchas:

1. The hunting bow in the average 140 cms long. This type of bow was also used in warfare.
2. A bow, in the average 180 cms long, used in marksmanship. The central part of the bow's shaft (*pyăng shing*) is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo, cut in a typical Lepcha design and fastened to the rod of the bow by resin and strings. The arrows, used for this bow, have a simple, conical iron point without barbs.
3. *Da bryó sŭ li*, pellet bow, in the average 150 cms long, used for killing birds. The centre of the bow's rod is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo. Four small, flat slivers of bamboo are bound together in the middle of the bow-string to form a small square, upon which a clay-ball (*da bryó*) can be placed. This central piece of the bow-string is called *sŭ li bryeng*. The bow-string is fastened to the shaft of the bow in such a way, that it remains slightly turned to the right, allowing the missile to fly past the bow and the hand which holds it. — The clay-balls, used for the *da bryó sŭ li* are usually burned to make them harder. The pellet bow can be seen very frequently in use during harvest time, when the fields have to be guarded against birds.

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

411 4. A small cross-bow is employed by the Lepchas in an automatic trap, which will be described later.

The bow is carried over the shoulder or in the hand, while a simple bamboo tube, which can be closed with a lid of the same material, serves as a quiver (*sā lu*).

It is customary among the Lepchas to handle the bow and arrow in the following way: The left hand grasps the rod of the bow in its centre and the upstretched thumb presses the shaft of the arrow gently against the bow. The first finger and the middle finger of the right hand together pull the bow-string, the stump end of the arrow resting between these two fingers. — To prevent injury from the released bow-string, the left armwrist is usually protected by a piece of leather, a woven bamboo bracelet (*tük bya*) or by a ring, made of a cow's horn.

411 224 Occasionally Lepcha hunters use a spear (*sūng hlyo*); its barbed iron head has in the average a length of 35 cms. The spear is mostly used when hunting bear or wild pig. Some Lepcha hunters even claim, that a poisoned spear can be used successfully for killing a rhino, which is said to have one weak spot in its back where a mortal wound can be inflicted.

224 Stories circulating among the Lepchas narrate that formerly pointed and poisoned wooden logs were used for killing elephants. After finding a passage in the jungle frequented by elephants — mostly near a place where elephants would come to drink — several hunters climbed on some high trees on both sides of the passage, suspending the log with the help of ropes above the trail. When an elephant passed below, the log was released at a favourable moment to wound the animal in the neck. The prey was then simultaneously attacked by other hunters with poisoned spears.

Traps

A great variety of traps are used by the Lepchas and only the most frequent types should be mentioned here.

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

For catching jungle fowl, hares and other small game, a spring bow (*ver sak*) is set in the following way. A short piece of wood, with a broad notch in its upper part, is stuck firmly into the ground and then another piece of wood, which has a notch loosely fitting into that of the first piece, is placed into it in a horizontal position. A bamboo shoot or a small tree is bent, a string attached to it and, lastly, a sling is made, which is led over the upper, horizontal arm of the previously described device. The bait is placed on the sling and by pulling at it, the horizontal arm slips out of the vertical piece and thus releases the trap. — The same kind of trap, only in a larger size, is used for catching deer. 223 224

Another kind of sling trap used for catching jungle fowl is the so-called *ma ló*. It consists of a row of slings, made of the hair of a horse-tail, which are suspended from a fixed horizontal beam. 223

A Lepcha dead-fall (*kóp*) for killing jungle fowl, is constructed as follows: A string is fastened to a tree and then led over a flat stone; the string ends in a short bamboo stick, to which a bait is fastened. Then another short string is bent into a loop and its two ends are firmly fastened to the ground at the bottom of the stone and the bamboo stick with the bait is then pulled through the loop, formed by the lower string, the tension of both strings holding the stone in a tilted position. A slight movement of the bamboo piece causes the upper sling to slip out of the loop and the stone thus drops on top of the animal.

Another kind of dead-fall, which has to be set on a jungle path, is the so-called *shil*. It consists of a heavy wooden beam, supported on one side by a lightly placed stick, which might be easily knocked down by an animal running along the path.

For catching birds, a small grill is made out of a few bamboo sticks, and is afterwards smeared with tarry birdlime (*a' yók*), obtained from a *Ficus* tree. The birdlime is usually kept ready for use in a small bamboo container (*po tek*). The grill, already smeared with bird lime, is known as *a' yók pün grim*; it is placed over [314 [illegible]]

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

troughs, filled with water, over springs, where birds come to drink or on the tops of trees.

An automatic spear trap (*sa lak*) is used for killing deer and sometimes a number of such traps are set, should a man-eating tiger roam around a settlement. In this case, people are warned to stay in the houses until the hunters have removed the traps again. The spear-traps are set with great care and at a certain hight, the hunter calculating the size of the tiger from its footprints. The spear-trap is made as follows: A huge bamboo tube is cut lengthwise and firmly fixed at a certain height and position with the help of several bamboo supports. Then a long piece of bamboo is fastened horizontally above the ground — at the same height of the bamboo tube — and bent strongly backwards until one end of it reaches the bamboo tube, where it is then held in its spanned position by means of a simple cock. A string is fastened to the latter and stretched low across the jungle path. At last a strong piece of bamboo, the front-end of which has been cut to a sharp point and usually poisoned, is placed in the tube as a missile. — Usually another string, also connected with the cock, is spanned breast high and further away in the direction from which a man might approach. If somebody then stumbles unaware into the trap, the missile is released beforehand without causing harm.

A small cross-bow trap (*sä lak tyăk*) is used for killing rats. It consists of a miniature cross-bow which aims into a bamboo tube, closed at its further end. The bow-string is cocked over one end of a movable bamboo stick, the other end of it, to which some bait is attached, reaching into the bamboo tube. By a slight pull at the bait, the stick, which holds back the bow-string, is moved and the arrow thus released. — It may be mentioned in this connection that poisoned food is also often laid out for killing rats, mice and other animals, who harm the crops.

Jungle fowl is sometimes caught with the help of a tent-like net. Its top is loosely hung up on a branch and its sides are fastened to the ground. On one side only, an entrance is left by lifting the flap

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
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the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223 286
it on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself
a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits
e stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or
simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from
e branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224
a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the
operation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pit-
lls (*tŭng bóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made
a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824]
nstructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the
tter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino
ould habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters
aim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and
sily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door
as constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages
ith trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys
ho cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of
unters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a
iff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the
ild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the
ikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a
ne of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas
ear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and
ecome a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226
o a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.—Analyst]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

opinion that Rum has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bo-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquite and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god."

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."[53] The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Gorer, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Gorer considers It-bo-mo to be female,[54] but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pum-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest

53. op. cit. p. 337.
54. op. cit. p. 336.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

776 The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who instructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize; sama, a kind of white millet; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[63] 796 782 796 782 224

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us. [776]

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." [784] Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god. [776]

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has [784 841]

63. Report from Kalimpong.

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782 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting
796 god must be performed. The animal is already carved up
224 in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit
[784] over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[64]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god
773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the Rong was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear ; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it ; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said, 'You have eaten part of my body ; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing, gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game, and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull was asleep ; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds. The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards ;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niu-big in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

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136 Gaval and Arna[illegible] the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

●224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bönmān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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[000 224] them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These [774] hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-shi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The [425] Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

411 The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ¾ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ½ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched pin in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]

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41 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [123] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

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rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Nepalese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very elementary and they could by no means compete with the Indian and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

VIII

142
291
302

19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

142
411
137
224

22. Lepcha hunter

Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

[End Plate 8]
[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
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of the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223 bait on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself 286 in a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits the stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or he simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from the branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224 by a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the cooperation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pitfalls (*tŭng bóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made of a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824] constructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the latter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino would habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters claim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and easily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door was constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages with trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys who cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of hunters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a cliff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the wild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the spikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a line of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas fear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and become a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226 to a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
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226 serves only to supply some food in addition to that obtained by tilling the fields and raising cattle. The following fishing devices are used by the Lepchas:

An ordinary fishing rod (*vór ham*) of bamboo, with a string and an iron hook (*vór*), upon which a bait is placed. — Similar to this is a simple device, certainly more ancient, called *hryeng*. Here the hook is substituted by a short, sharp piece of bamboo, which gets stuck in the throat of the fish.

Sometimes, a series of baited hooks is immersed in a river. The end of every line is wound around heavy stones lying on the bank and each string is then bent to form a sharp angle, being held in this position by a small stone. Should a fish get caught, the line will be moved out of its position and the fisherman who after some time comes to control the trap will thus recognize that a fish has been hooked.

226 Various kinds of nets, mostly made of the fibres of creeper plants,
286 are used; the most frequent type of net is the so-called *sŭng lí*, a conical throwing net. When spread out it is in the average some 140 cms high and its diameter measures approximately 160 cms. Around its opening, oblong pieces of lead are fastened and a long, strong rope is attached to its upper part. The fisherman, standing in the river, winds the rope loosely over his arm and then at a favourable moment throws the net quickly over the fish.

226 *Tŭk shor*: A simple bamboo trap, in the average some 60 cms long and 30 cms in diameter. To construct this device, a strong piece of bamboo is cut lengthwise, to three quarters of its total length, into a great number of sections. These sections are then bent apart and held in this position by a woven bamboo ring, the trap thus taking the form of a funnel. — Usually, several *tŭk shor* are placed in a row, near a stony barrier in the river, where fish are likely to jump and might thus fall into the trap, fig. 1.

Kŭr vyo: A pocket, made of bamboo; also the *kŭr vyo* is fastened to a barrier in the river, to catch the fish who are trying to jump the obstacle.

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
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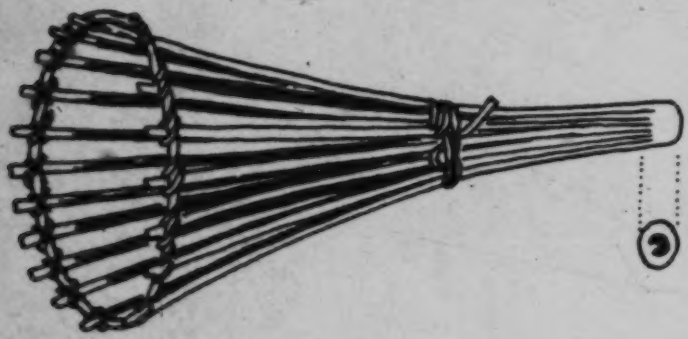

Fig. 1. A simple bamboo trap.

Ról or *Yet*: A huge chute made of bamboo, which is placed close o a small waterfall, above the surface of the river. Its planks are et wide apart to allow the water, which falls on it from above, to low quickly away, while bigger fish are left dry on the boards.

Fit: A narrow-woven bamboo basket with long spikes at its pening, which are turned towards the inside of the trap, preventing he fish, which had entered the basket, from leaving it again. The it is placed into the water and held down by a stone, placed on op of it. The fish, which has been caught, is removed through a lit in the bottom of the basket; this opening is afterwards closed gain with the help of a bamboo string.

A heavy stone or hammer is used to hit the stones under which ome fish have taken refuge. The dazed fish are then caught by and or with the help of a net. This method is mostly applied luring the dry season, when the streams are very low. — Occasionally, Lepcha fishermen use also bow and arrow to kill fish.

For the following methods of fishing, the cooperation of several ishermen is required:

A stone barrier is erected across a river, leaving only one opening

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
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226 in the wall, into which a huge, narrow-woven basket is placed. A beating line is then formed and the fish are driven into the trap.

226 278 At a favourable spot, by diverting a river into a channel and then erecting barriers of sand and stone, a small artificial lake is made in the old river bed. Afterwards, huge quantities of *a'ung el* (*Artemisia vulgaris*) are collected, placed into the lake and pounded. Then cut pieces of a strong creeper (*brüng*) are thrown into the pool, and the juice of these plants disolving in the water will poison all the fish which had been trapped in the artificially made lake.

226 All the catch, obtained by collective methods of fishing, is eventually divided equally among the participants.

NOTES

113 1. About the Lepchas see the following publications:

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Mainwaring, G. B., A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language. Calcutta 1878.

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Mainwaring, G. B. and Grünwedel, A., Dictionary of the Lepcha Language. Berlin 1898.

de Beauvoir-Stocks, C., Folk-lore and Customs of the Lep-chas of Sikhim. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Proceedings. Calcutta 1925.

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Morris, J., Living with Lepchas. London 1938.

de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. and Gorer, G., The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha Lamaist Ceremonies. Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV, No. 2. Lucknow 1951.

de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R., Ancient Funeral Ceremonies of the Lepchas. Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. V, No. 1. Lucknow 1951.

2. The rites and beliefs, connected with Lepcha hunting and fishing, will be dealt with later in a separate publication.

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
● 226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize; sama, a kind of white millet; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are 278
well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a [441]
deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick
layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrowhead but none
whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to
kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that
it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the
entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessa-
rily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated
mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience
the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient,
"Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from [439]
Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth
a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength.
The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade
with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly
ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed.
Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language
of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is
obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in
the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbour-
hood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in
Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the
poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow
flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember.
Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So
potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose
his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long
a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet,
the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the
animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the
poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of pre-
paration is known only to the Rong. The other people fear [648]
them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-
log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure
it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing
of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the [226]
gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison,
if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes
them inedible.

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated [Wolfszahnmuster] patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
●227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them.

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing.

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum.

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop.

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not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[8] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[8] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

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511 old mother to support, and he suffers himself from some sort of recurrent fever.

These households, and a few others, may get short of grain in the early summer and be driven to look for food in the forest to supplement the gifts they get; most households have usually a a small surplus at the end of the year which they use for extra feasting and presents. From the point of view of crops, though not [556] necessarily of money, the richest householders are the Mandal, Tafoor, Takneum *youmi*, Tingkep and Chelim. The first two are considered to be the best hosts, at whose house the finest food and drink is obtained.

V

231 Although of secondary importance as far as diet is concerned, domestic animals play a considerable rôle in the life of the Lepchas. Nearly all the ceremonies of the Mun demand animal sacrifices; animals are essential for the socio-religious celebrations of birth, marriage and death; and consequently people with few or no animals who get ill or have children or marry or die are at a considerable disadvantage and have to borrow animals for these ceremonies. Much of the indebtedness incurred with money lenders has been for the purchase of animals. Though the Lepcha can, and often does, borrow animals from his neighbours, he appears to feel a discomfort in being indebted to a friend which he does not feel towards the money lenders.

[556] By far the most important animal is oxen;[7] they are still the chief sign of wealth and a person with twenty head of cattle is considered a rich man. Their meat is the most esteemed and at important feasts, or if a person wants to make a display, it is always an ox which is killed. They are never used as beasts of burden (no animals are so used) but occasionally for ploughing; a certain amount of milk and butter is got from milch-cows. Only the most savage bulls are castrated. Cows are not mated and no pedigrees are kept.

Except for young calves, milch cows, and bullocks temporarily in use for ploughing, the animals are never tethered or herded; they wander all over the common land round the village where pasturage and wood-gathering are free; every evening they

[7] The Lepcha cattle have no hump; they resemble small European rather than Indian cattle. They have small horns and every variety and combination of colouring.

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return by themselves to their owners' houses, where they are given a feed of salt and powdered grain. Tethered animals are also fed with gathered leaves. Each animal has its name, which it knows; unless they wander into enclosed fields they are never beaten nor spoken to roughly. As you walk about Lingthem you come upon untended cattle in every direction; and one of the strangest sights is to watch the animals returning home of an evening. A herd of cattle, perhaps a score or more, will arrive in the centre of a group of houses, and will then each turn away to their own homes; as soon as they have settled under their houses they are given their evening feed. Stranger still is the fact that during the cold months—roughly from February to April—all the cattle, except the milch-cows, are sent in an untended group into the forest up the hill behind the village. When people want their cattle back they go up the hill to the place where they are liable to congregate, or, as the Lepchas put it 'where the cattle live in the forest', usually under some noticeably big tree. Within twenty-four hours cattle which have been completely untended for four months can be collected and brought back. While the cattle are in the forest a State tax of two annas a head a month is charged.

The taming of animals so completely is a remarkable feat in itself, and is also a good symbol of the Lepchas' chief attitudes; I think it has also an important bearing on their psychological development. In neighbouring tribes herding cattle is one of the major occupations of growing boys; in this way they achieve a certain self-reliance and learn to exercise their judgement. This discipline is almost completely absent for Lepcha boys; only when predatory animals are known or suspected to be in the neighbourhood are they set to watch animals. All through his childhood and adolescence the Lepcha boy is under the supervision of, and usually in company with his elders; and I feel sure that the lack of self-reliance, the inability to stand alone, which is one of the most obvious characteristics of the young Lepcha man, is enhanced by the lack of any work specially given over to children.

The size of the herds varies very considerably. The average is about six or seven head; a few households have considerably more and some people have only one or two, or even none at all.

Goats are raised exclusively for food and sacrifice and are never milked; they are not highly esteemed and people usually only

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231 have a few pairs. All goats are fed on salt, and billy goats are also given maize. Kids, and other young animals, are never killed for food.

Pigs also are raised for eating and sacrifice, but their meat is more popular and a large number are kept. They are the only animals which are generally killed for domestic eating. They are fed on the remains of *chi* after the grain has been three times soused. It is not rare for pigs and piglets to get quite drunk on this diet; there is quite a heavy mortality among them, and also occasionally among goats, who take the food by mistake, through their falling down dead drunk. The pig would appear to be a variety of the Himalayan wild pig; it is a relatively thin black animal, covered with bristles. All boars are castrated at the age of three or four months, by which time, it is said, they will have been old enough to cover the sow once. There are two reasons for thus castrating the boars; if it is not done it is said they would become savage and wander away into the forest. But there is a greater danger than [838] this; if a man should happen to eat the flesh of an uncastrated pig he would thereupon commit sodomy. This is an example of the 811 notion of *tamtoom*, an extremely important major Lepcha idea; if two events are believed to be inevitably connected, though the actual causation of the second by the first is not obvious, the second event is said to be the *tamtoom* of the first. With our logical attitude to the external world we have no proper parallel to this notion; the nearest approach would be if our common superstitions were believed to be specific and ineluctable. If for example walking under a ladder were believed to produce, say, a financial loss, this loss would be the *tamtoom* of walking under a ladder. The two acts need not necessarily be performed by or happen to the same person; when pre-natal precautions and body-marks are discussed, it will be seen that the child often suffers the *tamtoom* of his parents' actions.

838 Sodomy is strongly anti-social—it is called *nam-toak*, an act producing a year of disaster, the term which is also applied to incest—and an extremely embarrassing subject, one of the very few people don't like discussing. There is one man in the village, Takneum *youmi*, who has twice sodomised people when he was drunk and the victim asleep. In the second case, which occurred recently, the victim was old Lharibu Chujen, himself a grandfather; [684] he was not angry at the indignity offered and did not claim the recompense of a pig and five rupees and ceremonial cleansing by a Mun to which he was entitled.

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *youmi*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers. 838

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass. 231 514 539

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again. 231

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even un- 262 673 knowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapön*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapön* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

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152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
[857] and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

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341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars [417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which 231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a [787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he 342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of 779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. [262] Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not
231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from
857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer
224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen,
868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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351
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Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Aakyah*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

[FACING p.226]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the
262 woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her
[301] neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common
[303] dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun
[231] from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

262 In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can
[484] find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and
[263] dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is
[276] never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

[264] They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots
415 of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

[71] * Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

[813] † Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

[539] Ee Ye!

Mo-tan-chi Roń kap ńun non bān	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lā-non po-bong yit duk kań sa	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsam* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsam po-mig duk kań sa pa-s'or beń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kang sa Roń kap pam yoń s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

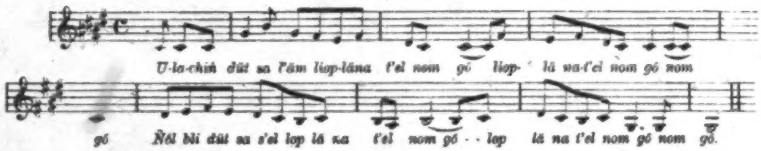
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the [574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing [273] behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUŃ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duń dūt sa-l'ām liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ńōl-bli dūt sa-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Soń la lyen s'ū fań-ruń „ „ „ „	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer ki-vun nań nāń liop-lā diń mit nom gó,	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tań-kat sa-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a bright golden tussel.
Mit tań-gum diń-mit nom „ „ „ „	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bāl-la liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'ot nań nāń „ „ „ „	Like a sorrowing *S'uń* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loń la ma run na ńo „ „ „ „	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ne tak-mok buk go ma l'ān na-yań	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-che-ne* yam [7])
Kyoń-rōa-lo lat dok ā-tim-bu lāt non-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyoń-rōa-lo* heart.

[824] [1]) *Pa-shor* is a small reed[illegible]boo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo
[231] from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poa*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[415] [2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine crocana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poā-f'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poā-his*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *hip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ńol-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *lan-s'u.*

[222] [7]) *Tak-mok-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surfaces and is only to be dug up with great labour.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[173] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niu-big in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

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small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tschangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear. 136 [231 ● 855]

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu. 136 171

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[67] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[68]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

67. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 132 sq.
68. E. C. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. E. Livesey, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 190 sq., W. S. Thom, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 106 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 222, seq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 134 sq.

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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection. 776 [782]

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

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rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [136]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Nepalese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very elementary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

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231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

142
231
482
412
415
291
857

25. Lepcha children starting for field work

142
291
243
462

26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 [262]

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bōn-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bōn-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bōn-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [574]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [511]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for te ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [512]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342

346
241

Above: A LEPCHA HOUSE

Below: A *MOONG LI:* A HOUSE FOR THE 'HOUSE-GOBLIN' *THYAK-DUM*, SITUATED IN A CARDAMUM FIELD; BEHIND ANOTHER HOUSE

[facing p. 60]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with rice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *chi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to the inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new house would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if the old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* would accompany them, spending most of his time with them, but occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last point is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens that Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently unlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and if it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, the survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem had had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabitants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were actually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors preferred to live with relations rather than cope with the work alone.

V

In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; it is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables and roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are only grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of the field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring wheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This garden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal manure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals shelter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. At the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, cultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable material. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit trees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and occasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their flowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the surrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land near their house. All possess some strips of land—often more than a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes of the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of wet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

vi

776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

has at least a couple of terraces and some considerably more. These terraces are scattered all over the valley, and it is rare for two contiguous strips to belong to the same owner. It is theoretically permissible to exchange plots so that they shall be better grouped, but nobody considers doing so. 243

The rice terraces are turned with a rough single-pointed wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen, as is the *sing* or field-garden near the house. Except on these artificially levelled places the ground is too precipitous for the use of a plough to be possible. Two main crops are raised in the field-garden annually; first a mixture of barley and wheat, and subsequently maize. These grains are chiefly raised as stop-gap crops, and for fermenting; maize is thought little of, and to eat much of it is the surest sign of poverty. A number of fruits and vegetables are also raised on the edge of the field-garden to give a variety of flavourings to the main rice dish; the greater number of these are importations from India, such as various varieties of pulse, tomatoes and chilli; some of them however are wild plants found locally and domesticated; such are various lavatera, arums and alliums. The collection of some of these wild plants have some ritual attached to them; the allium *safyou* for example, which is only found in one place, must be dug up with sharpened sticks; if knives are used the supernatural Jamfi *moong* will be angry and throw sticks at the collectors and cause hail and thunder. Even more unpleasant is the mountain plant *chok-li bi* (probably a sort of rhubarb) which is said to be delicious; however you gather that plant hail will fall as the stems are picked. [556] 241

Cardamum is grown in small clearings all over the lower slopes of the valley. It is a perennial plant propagated by cuttings which are taken in the early spring; the plant reaches its full bearing period within three years; at the end of ten years it starts to decline and new plantings have to be made; this can however be done on the same ground as the plant does not exhaust the soil. The plants need a good deal of care, and have to be hand-weeded at least three times a year, for the buds and fruit form close to the ground. When the fruit is gathered the old growth is cut down and burned. Cardamum plants are a favourite hiding-place for snakes. For the Lepchas cardamum is a foreign importation from Nepal; they always refer to it by its Nepali name—*elaiji*—and with the cultivation of the plant has come a whole complex of alien beliefs and ritual. Nothing is done when the 249

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, 241
nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up
rtly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since 476
e Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's
de and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most 601
llagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a
ozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain
uld be established between eight of them. But this relationship
not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there
ere a few people quite unrelated.

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of 241
bour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given
meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people 476
ho volunteer their services, but must be given to those who
e asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty
fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet
maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are
ven proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry
ce, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present
the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum
a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with
is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the [465]
elds and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market.

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared 252
four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and 262
ten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole
milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This
ound-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize
ay be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not
ed. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight
India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its
uivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and
rtly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various
glish measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the
dian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs.
he Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket [804]
ed. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an
proximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 stayed there seven days and when he went away the people of Mayel asked him not to talk about them when he returned; and they gave him as gifts rice seed which he sowed and the fruit of pumpkin and cucumber which turned into stone.

Another hunter from Sakhyong also found his way there but he was not so fortunate. When he came to the village he found a child and asked him 'Who are your father and mother?' The child said 'We are our own fathers and mothers, we are babies and young people and old people'. The man then picked and cooked some rice. When the people came near he threatened them with his knife. At this they said to him 'Do not do that; cook and eat your rice and go away. If you do not we will drive you away with our dogs'. When they said that he looked round and saw huge dogs like bears with enormous eyes. Then he was very frightened and ran away at once with some of the cooked rice in his hand. As he ran home there was a terrific thunderstorm, and he was pelted with snow and hail. Since the time of these adventurous travellers the road has been closed with an enormous rock.

ii

241 The people of Mayel are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of dry rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long lists of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in those houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops, and, after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered *sakyou faat* to ensure a good harvest. Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayel; the others come from different supernaturals. Barley, wheat, buckwheat and wet rice come from Kongsen-bu, the God of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said[2] comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-*nyou*, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayel are said to share this dislike, and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the

[2] See Chapter Three, p. 92.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies—or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafét* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafét* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafét*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 782 selves will give a small present to the Mun who will sing for all of them. The grain which is used in this sacrifice has to be specially ripened in the sun in the same way as the grain for seed is ripened. This completes the ceremony of sowing and it is always followed by a feast in which meat is eaten.

The ceremony of harvesting is far more complicated. It is only employed for the dry rice. When the dry rice is ripe a little is picked to be prepared for *chi* and when the *chi* is ready the owner of the field summons all his friends and they go together to pick [753] rice. Until the ceremony is completed nobody, not even children, may pick any grain or he would get ill; if anybody gets stomach-ache at that period people will say that he has picked rice before it was harvested.

It is necessary to have ready beforehand the smoke-dried *tafoot* of a pig. The *tafoot* would seem to be the gall-bladder or spleen; it is round and has a white smelly liquid inside and is found near the bladder, but in pigs and musk deer it is said to be found near the penis at the end. On the day of reaping this *tafoot* is taken up to the field of dry rice together with two burning brands from the house-fire and also a *patyoot* of *chi* made from the new rice. When the party arrives, a place in the centre of the field is chosen as the *ʒo-lam* (the place where the crops are heaped); some rice-plants in the centre of the *ʒo-lam* are tied together into a sheaf and then the two burning brands will be held above them and on these a piece of the *tafoot* will be put. Then an old and experienced man—not the owner of the field but any one of his workers—will be chosen to represent a man of Mayel (called for the ceremony Mayel-mu) and he will blow on the *tafoot* and speak; while this is done a special measuring basket is held upside down over the brand. The old man will summon the gods and the ancestors and will say 'Come and see the smoke; burr—burr—burr—burr'. Then all the people present will repeat, 'burr—burr—burr'. By this invocation it is hoped that the gods will come and bring back all the grain eaten by wild birds and animals.

Standing by the speaker is a woman not directly connected with the field owner, who has been chosen for the day to represent Talyeu-mu, one of the earth sisters. When Mayel-mu has finished his invocation the measuring basket is put on his back and Talyeu-mu cuts the tied grain and puts it in the basket. Then Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu, who acts as her load carrier, go round the *ʒo-lam* cutting a basket of rice for Talyeu-mu; at the same time

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the others cut two baskets of rice for the people of Mayel. When the three baskets have been cut four or five reed mats are put down on the flattened ground and all dance on the rice to separate the grain from the chaff. All the dances are round dances and semi-acrobatic, consisting chiefly of hopping and jumping; nine different types are recognised and three rounds of each type are danced in turn. After the dancing Talyeu-mu goes round the edge of the field cutting another basket while all the other reapers work in a row to fill two more baskets which are heaped up like the first; after these have been put on the *ʒo-lam* the *nam-toak* (potential curse) is lifted and all can cut as they like; but during the whole day Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu cut apart from the others. When the second heap of rice has been poured on to the *ʒo-lam* a fence is erected to the south of it consisting of three leafy saplings joined by a bamboo; on it a mat is hung and then from the three posts are fastened three bundles of rice-plants, ears downwards, hanging over the mat. After this fence is set up the *patyoot* of new *chi* is placed against it and Mayel-mu offers it with an invocation. Then at the four corners of the *ʒo-lam* are erected four posts of a sort of reed or bamboo; the top part is split into three and the two side pieces are bent down to make loops.

When the *ʒo-lam* has been completed all do as they like; some gather rice, some dance, some drink *chi* and so on. The harvesting must be completed before the sun has touched the hills; if all is not cut by then the work must go on the next day and the people must spend the night on the harvest field, as will be explained lower down. Right at the end must be gathered another three baskets of rice which must be completed at the same time; these three baskets are all emptied at the same time to the east of the heap and all present cry 'burr, burr, burr'. The rice is now put in eight heaps; that of the morning is put in the centre where the house-mother works; that of Talyeu-mu to the east and the other six heaps in a semi-circle to the north; these six heaps are named after six big mountains in the neighbourhood. Then the rice is separated from the chaff and straw partially by hand and partially by dancing; all work together at the different heaps except the house-mother and Talyeu-mu who work theirs by themselves. When all the rice is sifted the house-mother and Talyeu-mu push the heap of Talyeu-mu to the centre heap saying 'May the heap support us firmly and be as the sea'. After that all the other heaps are pushed into the centre, one after the other in due order. Then a wreath of rice

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241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of
782 charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can
786 drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *zo-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafêt* is offered with the new
782 *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

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241 784

look at grain drying in the sun. Until that time grain must be dried over the fire; for if the gods of Mayel saw grain drying in the sun before they had been offered any they would be angry and would not come the next year and there would be a bad harvest. Until everybody has made the sacrifice people who go where they may see rice drying in the sun—across the river or to Mangan or Gangtok—must cover their face with a cloth. If a man who has not made his sacrifice were ordered by the Mandal to go abroad where he might see rice being dried, he would have a valid excuse for not going and a substitute would have to be found for him. Should a man by any chance see crops drying he would be considered to have *amik-her*, which is almost the evil eye; if a man with *amik-her* were to look on a field the people of Mayel would be terrified as if by an enemy and would run away and would not return next year. Therefore a man who has accidentally seen drying crops would live in the jungle or in a field-house or cardamum field until the rice of the neighbourhood was gathered; if he should be a person who would normally sacrifice he would not do so that year. To avoid this danger Lepchas who have to go to Mangan at the harvesting season only go at night so that they will see no drying crops. For a man with *amik-her* to look at the harvest would be *nam-toak*—a year of disaster—as bad as if incest had been committed. When people have performed their sacrifices they send and tell the Mandal who then sends the *gyapön* round with the message that now all have sacrificed and crops can be dried in the sun. All the inhabitants of Lingthem, Panung, Liklyang and Salim have to wait till they get the message before they can expose crops. Should anybody expose his crops before all were ready the Mandal would fine him Rs. 15; but such a case has not occurred in the last twenty years, though some are known of earlier. Besides dry rice, maize and three varieties of millet cannot be exposed to the sun. This prohibition does not apply to the other sorts of millets nor to barley, buckwheat, and wet rice. Grains must also not be exposed until a sort of wild grass which grows on the far side of the Talung river has turned yellow.

The Lepchas of Zongu are very serious about this prohibition on seeing drying crops in the sun; it is a custom which has descended from the ancestors of our ancestors. 'The people outside Zongu say they don't care; "the grain is in the sun when it is on the stalk; what is the difference when it is cut?" they say; but we people in Zongu have always acted in this way.' For Lepchas

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241 784 living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

241 The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

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224 782 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

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"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

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241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

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of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [532]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412]
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

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Typical Lepcha homestead.

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Sowing dry rice.

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Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

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351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

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241 The following calendar shows the arrangement of agricultural work throughout the year. It starts with February, which is the first month of the Tibetan year:

February:	Clear ground and sow buckwheat in the lower parts of the valley.
March:	Clear ground and sow dry rice, millet, and a little maize.
April:	Clear ground in the higher places and sow more dry rice, millet, barley and wheat; the last two being sown together as a mixed crop.
May:	Reap buckwheat, and sow more millet and maize.
June:	Plant rice terraces. Weed dry rice. This is the worst month for food shortage.
July:	Sow more millet and also buckwheat. General weeding.
August:	Reap the first rice terraces, and prepare drying sheds for cardamoms. Sow more buckwheat.
September:	Reap dry rice and cardamoms. This is done mostly by the men, as it is heavy work. At the same time the women reap the millet.
October:	Sow barley and wheat, also onions. Continue reaping the cardamom crop.
November:	Clear ground for buckwheat. Make arrangements to sell the cardamom harvest.
December:	Continue to dispose of cardamoms. Women start to prepare the ground for buckwheat. This is the slackest month of the year.
January:	Sow buckwheat.

* * * * *

585 Most marriages take place in October, November, and December, as during these three months money and plenty of 005 food are available, and work is light. House-building and

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249 177 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded, except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 778 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner. It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

* * * * *

[244] 773 It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth 773
he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made 776
his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nazong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each [782
year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal 241]
most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in 776
Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-kōb, and the daughter, Bi-kōb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-kōb and Bi-kōb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices [792]
performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni- [773]
gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection. 776 [782]

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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776 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-
782 faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of
[244 Mayal ; the others come from different supernaturals, barley,
776] wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity ; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share
[841] this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse
[786 between the sexes ; however, the comprehensive ban on in-
[833 cestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom
171] which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or
[262] a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must
[515] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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411 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [123] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

● 241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

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rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241 ●
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [511]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [512]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.

412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikal in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[868] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 412 The most important of the implements used for farming is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[17] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 174 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

XVI

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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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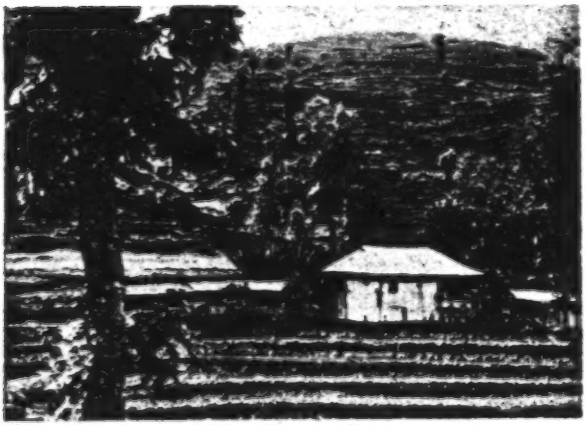

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 539 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the [421] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what 124] their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority [556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side [249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned [242] about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

order forbidding the destruction of trees. When all the debris has been collected the straight sticks are sorted out and the rest is put into heaps and set fire to, the ashes acting as a loosener and fertiliser of the soil. After burning, the ground is cleared of charred wood and the remaining weeds by hand and is then sown with the main crop. This is done in the simplest manner possible; holes are made in the ground with a pointed stick and the seed dropped into and round them. 243

The principal crops of these temporary fields are dry rice and millet. Twelve varieties of dry rice are named and recognised by small differences in their height, colour of seed and earlier or later ripening. Wild rice is found in the neighbourhood and most of their varieties come from seed selected from these wild plants. One of their most esteemed sorts, the 'black' rice, comes from a small amount of seed collected in the jungle by the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's father; it was grown exclusively for seed for some years and now all the villagers have a good stock of it. The seed of all crops except wet rice is saved from year to year; it is the special business of the 'house-mother' at harvest time to select and put aside the grain which will be needed for the next year's seed. The sowing and harvesting of dry rice is surrounded with an elaborate ritual which will be described later.

A great number of different millets and eleusines are cultivated. Small fields of the earlier ripening varieties are made in the valley and a big field for the main crop is grown higher up. Only one field of dry rice and one of main-crop millet are made every year. Sometimes other grains or plants are grown among these crops, a certain amount of maize or different vegetables if the field-garden cannot take enough. In the autumn, after the rice or millet is gathered, the fields are sown with buckwheat which ripens in about five months; when that is harvested the ground is allowed to lie fallow for seven years. Two sowings of buckwheat are made annually; a big one in the autumn for food, and a smaller one in the spring for seed.

Lepcha agriculture is extremely inefficient by the standard of yield per acre. It is also absolutely inefficient. I was shocked at the carelessness of the sowing, with perhaps a third of the grain lying on the bare ground and the seed in the holes inadequately covered. When I remonstrated I was told 'It doesn't matter; if all the rice were to come up it would be too thick; so that if the birds eat some it will be just right.' To prevent the birds taking too 242

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

242 much a prayer is said (usually by an experienced layman) after each sowing. It is arguable that more intensive cultivation would not result in a bigger yield per hour of work; and the continuous change of ground, only possible with a light population, prevents erosion and soil exhaustion. The accompanying table shows schematically the work of the Lepcha agricultural year.

LEPCHA AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR
(for the Talung valley)

221 805 (*Note*: The Tibetan year begins in February, and the first of the Tibetan month falls on about the tenth of the English. Consequently 'February', e.g. should be interpreted as 'February 10th to March 10th.')

TANGBU (February).	Clear the ground and finish sowing buckwheat. This and the two preceding months are the period of intense cold when poor old people may die for lack of warmth.
NIBU (March)	Finish clearing ground and sow dry paddy in temporary fields; sow maize and early millet in valley. Weed cardamum in flower and strike new plants. This and the following month is the time of rain and hail-storms.
SUMGU (April)	Harvest barley and wheat. Clear ground for main-crop millet. Weed cardamum again round new-formed fruit.
ZIBU (May)	Harvest buckwheat. Sow maincrop millet. Sow maize in 'garden' burning the wheat straw for fertilising. This and the three following months are the period of constant rain and heat. Head-coverings are necessary.
NAPU (June)	Plant wet rice. Weed dry rice. This is the leanest month when people may go hungry. In this and the following month is the greatest infantile mortality, through diarrhoea and dysentery.
TIKPU (July)	Harvest earliest millets in valley. Weed maincrop millet.
DENGBU (August)	Harvest earliest variety of wet rice. Make a shed to dry cardamum fruit. Make a small sowing of buckwheat for seed.
GEBU (September)	Harvest dry rice. The women start harvesting the millet, the men the cardamum. This and the two following months are relatively dry.
GOOBU (October)	Cardamum picking continues. Wet rice is harvested. Barley, wheat and onions are sown in the 'garden'.
CHOOPU (November)	The seed-buckwheat is harvested. Cardamum is sold. This and the next two months are the prosperous period, the time of little work and much feasting, of shopping and trading expeditions. Most marriages are celebrated now.
CHUCHIKPU (December)	Taxes are paid. The harvested temporary fields must be made ready for buckwheat.
CHUNIPU (January).	The big sowing of buckwheat.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains 243
were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

I noticed that amongst the seed for planting were three potatoes. These were also to be planted in the field for the purpose of providing seed for next year's crop. I suggested [244 that so few a number would be lost sight of in so large a field. 242] Jiroong agreed: he usually planted them in the field outside his house, but was trying them here to see what happened. There is no ceremony in connection with planting the first seed; nor does it matter whether men or women do the planting. To-day the actual planting was being done by women; but this was of no significance.

Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in [242] the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice- 243
planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of 781
Mayel Rum, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is [242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

has at least a couple of terraces and some considerably more. These 243
terraces are scattered all over the valley, and it is rare for two contiguous strips to belong to the same owner. It is theoretically permissible to exchange plots so that they shall be better grouped, but nobody considers doing so.

The rice terraces are turned with a rough single-pointed wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen, as is the *sing* or field-garden near the house. Except on these artificially levelled places the ground is too precipitous for the use of a plough to be possible. Two main crops are raised in the field-garden annually; first a mixture of barley and wheat, and subsequently maize. These grains are chiefly raised as stop-gap crops, and for fermenting; maize is thought [556]
little of, and to eat much of it is the surest sign of poverty. A
number of fruits and vegetables are also raised on the edge of the 241
field-garden to give a variety of flavourings to the main rice dish; the greater number of these are importations from India, such as various varieties of pulse, tomatoes and chilli; some of them however are wild plants found locally and domesticated; such are various lavatera, arums and alliums. The collection of some of these wild plants have some ritual attached to them; the allium *safyou* for example, which is only found in one place, must be dug up with sharpened sticks; if knives are used the supernatural Jamfi *moong* will be angry and throw sticks at the collectors and cause hail and thunder. Even more unpleasant is the mountain plant *chok-li bi* (probably a sort of rhubarb) which is said to be delicious; however you gather that plant hail will fall as the stems are picked.

Cardamum is grown in small clearings all over the lower slopes 249
of the valley. It is a perennial plant propagated by cuttings which are taken in the early spring; the plant reaches its full bearing period within three years; at the end of ten years it starts to decline and new plantings have to be made; this can however be done on the same ground as the plant does not exhaust the soil. The plants need a good deal of care, and have to be hand-weeded at least three times a year, for the buds and fruit form close to the ground. When the fruit is gathered the old growth is cut down and burned. Cardamum plants are a favourite hiding-place for snakes. For the Lepchas cardamum is a foreign importation from Nepal; they always refer to it by its Nepali name—*elaiji*—and with the cultivation of the plant has come a whole complex of alien beliefs and ritual. Nothing is done when the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [841] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; [763] they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

order forbidding the destruction of trees. When all the debris has been collected the straight sticks are sorted out and the rest is put into heaps and set fire to, the ashes acting as a loosener and fertiliser of the soil. After burning, the ground is cleared of charred wood and the remaining weeds by hand and is then sown with the main crop. This is done in the simplest manner possible; holes are made in the ground with a pointed stick and the seed dropped into and round them. 243

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243

Above: CLEARING THE GROUND OF WEEDS AND TWIGS; TOBGÊ TALKS TO CHÉLÉ

Below: PLANTING DRY RICE WITH PLANTING STICKS

N.B.—The camera was not tilted for these pictures.

[facing p. 96]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243 "dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields), millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177] introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans, one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of terraces for growing rice under water entails very considerable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157] indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat. Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556] wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243 this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157 however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling, although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 157 my mind, that Nepali settlers would increase the yield of this extremely fertile land threefold; but they would do it to their own individual advantage. But if the Nepali, why not the Lepcha? The Lingtem people were always complaining that they could not afford an iron roof for the monastery. I should personally regret to see the present thatch removed; but that is for purely æsthetic reasons. A roof of corrugated iron would doubtless be more efficient, and if the people really want one, to say nothing of schools and other desiderata, it would be perfectly possible for them, by means of better agricultural methods, to raise the necessary funds. As at present constituted they have in their social structure all the makings of the perfect socialist state; but they have, of course, no leaders. What they require is a missionary; a non-religious missionary, that is; someone of the type that has obtained such remarkable results amongst the one-time ignorant peasants of Russia.

[65] 000 Jongu is now protected for the Lepchas and is to all intents and purposes an ethnological museum. Since it is a museum it may just as well be a good one; and the improvement of the people's condition, in which I would include sufficient education to free them from the thraldom of gods and demons, would form an unique opportunity for some educated Lepcha. There are many such in the Kalimpong district, where education has been long available; but removed from their natural environment Lepchas are forced to suppress their more altruistic characteristics in the general struggle for existence. In a district which cannot absorb even a fraction of its educated population this state of affairs is inevitable; at any rate until such time as manual work is no longer considered to be unsuited to the dignity of the so-called educated classes. In the meantime here is a chance for some public-spirited Lepcha; someone who still has some regard for the better qualities of the tribe to which he belongs. If the Jongu people remain as at present their total extinction as a separate tribe is only a matter of a few more generations. This, in view of their many admirable qualities,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

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243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains 243
were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

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Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in [242] the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice- 243
planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of 781
Mayel Rum, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old [888] and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, [857] without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong 533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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27. Lepcha farmer winnowing rice

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28. Lepcha shepherd with rain-cap

[End Plate 10]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [713]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

[514 364] 241

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342 Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356 April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249 third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841 plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784 who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249 offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244] for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244] finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249 may p[illegible]bly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec. -- Analyst]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *choten*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu.

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation.

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

has at least a couple of terraces and some considerably more. These terraces are scattered all over the valley, and it is rare for two contiguous strips to belong to the same owner. It is theoretically permissible to exchange plots so that they shall be better grouped, but nobody considers doing so. 243

The rice terraces are turned with a rough single-pointed wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen, as is the *sing* or field-garden near the house. Except on these artificially levelled places the ground is too precipitous for the use of a plough to be possible. Two main crops are raised in the field-garden annually; first a mixture of barley and wheat, and subsequently maize. These grains are chiefly raised as stop-gap crops, and for fermenting; maize is thought little of, and to eat much of it is the surest sign of poverty. A number of fruits and vegetables are also raised on the edge of the field-garden to give a variety of flavourings to the main rice dish; the greater number of these are importations from India, such as various varieties of pulse, tomatoes and chilli; some of them however are wild plants found locally and domesticated; such are various lavatera, arums and alliums. The collection of some of these wild plants have some ritual attached to them; the allium *safyou* for example, which is only found in one place, must be dug up with sharpened sticks; if knives are used the supernatural Jamfi *moong* will be angry and throw sticks at the collectors and cause hail and thunder. Even more unpleasant is the mountain plant *chok-li bi* (probably a sort of rhubarb) which is said to be delicious; however you gather that plant hail will fall as the stems are picked. [556] 241

Cardamum is grown in small clearings all over the lower slopes of the valley. It is a perennial plant propagated by cuttings which are taken in the early spring; the plant reaches its full bearing period within three years; at the end of ten years it starts to decline and new plantings have to be made; this can however be done on the same ground as the plant does not exhaust the soil. The plants need a good deal of care, and have to be hand-weeded at least three times a year, for the buds and fruit form close to the ground. When the fruit is gathered the old growth is cut down and burned. Cardamum plants are a favourite hiding-place for snakes. For the Lepchas cardamum is a foreign importation from Nepal; they always refer to it by its Nepali name—*elaiji*—and with the cultivation of the plant has come a whole complex of alien beliefs and ritual. Nothing is done when the 249

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 539 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the [42] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what 124 their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority [556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side [249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is [242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [841] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; [763] they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
177 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
178 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

* * * * *

[244] It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
173 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[352] 342 for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the [354] daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353 554] there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[8] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[8] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and
[846] more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

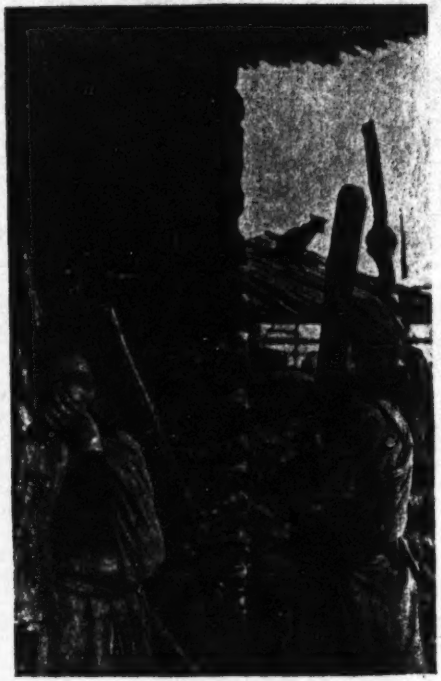
1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

273 not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are
[231] normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has
[758] medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[8] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

262 Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa,
[437] who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages
[252] are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[8] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



WOMEN PREPARE FOOD

Chlaa Mandal's two wives winnow rice on the balcony of their house.

Mrs. Gongyop and Mrs. Chano join together to pound rice in the courtyard. Behind, a dog has got on to the balcony, where it has no right to be.

252
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[facing p. 264]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

855 Lepcha children do not manifest. The extra timidity and lack of self-reliance seems to persist amongst such children until they are themselves parents. Amongst adults I did not notice any consistent type of behaviour which would indicate an only child, but the youngest, if there were elder siblings living, seemed to carry a great deal of their attitude of reliance on their parents over to their elder siblings until relatively late in life. The Lepchas agree that a youngest child is generally the best loved and most spoilt and given the best food, but they did not consider that there was any consistent difference in character between the youngest and other children; some might be cleverer than their elders, others duller.

854 Babies are very little talked to, and when they are it is usually in baby language. They are patted and kissed quite a lot. Kissing—the pressing of the lips on to another's cheek—is exclusively a pattern of behaviour between adults and young children. It forms no part of adult sexual behaviour. Adults who have been in the relationship of parent and child click their tongues at one another when they meet after a prolonged absence. Occasionally a woman will play with a baby's lips and tongue with her own tongue—a pastime both parties appear to enjoy; but by far the most common stimulation of children is patting their bottoms while they are being carried on a person's back; both men and women do this almost automatically when they are walking about or standing talking while carrying a baby; the patting is gentle and rhythmic.

Until a child is fairly well developed its parents do not encourage it to acquire physical independence and body techniques, chiefly I think on account of the long distances people have to go to reach their fields; a toddling and stumbling baby is far more of a handicap than a carried one. Elder siblings are more likely to encourage a baby in walking and balance, as the baby is a far greater burden and drawback to a child of six or seven than to an adult. The Lepchas consider that the backwardness of only children is due to the fact that they have no elder siblings to encourage and teach them.

While a baby is still at the breast its chief diet is pounded grain cooked in water or milk. When they have all their teeth they are given little pieces of meat, but only as titbits and not as the main part of the meal. They are given fruits as they ripen. After about [252] the age of two they are given popped corn and cooked grain to nibble while they are hungry, and from about that age they start getting a sip of *chi*.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 482.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FOOD

i

261 For the Lepchas, as for almost all primitive peoples, by far the most important subject in their lives is food. Far and away the greatest part of their lives is centred round food-getting; it is impossible to over-stress its importance. But because food-getting is so constant a preoccupation, and because it is fairly featureless and uneventful, it nearly always, it seems to me, receives far less attention than it deserves. The features chiefly dealt with by ethnologists, including of course the greater part of this book, are those which take place during the primitive's leisure. Some peoples, I am aware, centre their social and religious life about food; 771 but this is not the case with the Lepchas. Food-products play a considerable rôle in the objects of sacrifice, but with the lamas this aspect is not stressed; most ceremonial objects are made out of grain-flour and butter, but this is because they are the most convenient and easily accessible materials; by the time they have been fashioned the edible qualities of these objects are not apparent. A minor sacrifice is made when a new field is taken into cultivation for the first time, and prayers are said, usually by a layman, after each sowing; and the Mun make elaborate ceremonies, to be described later, yearly at the flowering of the cardamum, and at the sowing and gathering of dry rice. In the annual cycle of lamaist ceremonies there are a certain number which are devoted to the protection of crops from hail and predatory beasts, and, before the sowing starts, some seed is collected from each household and given a communal blessing at a monastery service; but these rites take an insignificant place in the yearly sum of religious ceremonies. Lepcha religion is above all occupied with health.

261 Food does however play a very important rôle in the Lepchas' 152 emotional lives. Love, whether between spouses, friends, or parents and children, is considered to be the result of mutual

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

261 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering
152 and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the
178 less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so-called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples 771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a 793 kind of illness."[105]

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105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

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621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far 184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the ● 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest 539 when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

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horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar ') 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [187]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

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and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

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261 benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering
152 and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

262 All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

224 As has already been said, in former times and still today in the
178 less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

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Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[6] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[6] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

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252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and
[846] more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

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273 not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are
[231] normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has
[758] medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[6] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

● 262 Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa,
[437] who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages
[252] are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[6] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

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of cooking dishes and compounding the various ingredients; but on the whole the material provided is of more importance than the cooking. Except that a meal with meat is universally preferred to one without there does not seem to be any particularly favourite food; Tafoor voiced the general opinion when he said his favourite dish was *chi*. I did not get enough detailed menus to be able to state with certainty how often meat is usually eaten inside the household; from such information as I have got I should say richer people eat it three or four times a week, poor people once or twice. When it is available it is eaten in the morning and evening.

Lepcha diet is relatively monotonous, notably less highly spiced than the food of the Nepali or Indians; there are no devices for tempting jaded palates; food is to satisfy hunger, and enough is as bad as a meal. A feast definitely implies over-eating, and it is quite a common subject among old people to deplore that their powers of over-eating are failing; that once upon a time they could eat fourteen pounds of meat in a day, and now they cannot manage four with comfort! These actual figures were used by Adér, who is well over seventy and has lost half his teeth.

As can be seen, the Lepchas have, for a primitive people, a remarkably high standard of living, as far as food and drink is concerned; it is certainly far higher than that of the Lepchas outside Zongu or any of the neighbouring peoples that I know of. Levelling out the answers I have received and my own observations, I should say that the average consumption of grain annually by an adult Lepcha is about 400 lbs.; besides that about another 300 lbs. is consumed for *chi*. These quantities naturally do not allow for entertainment or gifts. There are three households who perhaps do not quite reach this standard, those of Dunbi, Nahyeun and Pargeut. Dunbi is said to be the poorest man in the village, but this is chiefly his own fault, for he sits about drinking and gossiping instead of working. Nahyeun is a young man fairly recently married; he is reputed to be Dunbi's bastard and is himself not over energetic. He recently married Tobgé's sister and they have set up house on their own because his wife did not agree with the two wives of Asang, with whom he formerly lived; they consequently have no reserves and few permanent fields. The third poor man, Pargeut, is really unfortunate; he has six small children of which only the two eldest are of an age to help him, and they are girls betrothed outside the village; he has also a very

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even unknowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the 262 673 lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

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512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though [461] they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asék*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273 cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862] hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink 262 on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302 intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273 usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 [262]

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

nettles, which they have previously gathered against their 585
arrival. As soon as the *Sarong chut* is handed over the party is allowed to enter the house, where it spends the rest of the day and night feasting and drinking. The pork is consumed by the women only, and the men receive no share of it.

When the bridegroom's party arrives it is given a light meal of tea and parched rice, followed, of course, by the inevitable *chi*. Later on a special ceremonial meal known as *Sohol set* [262]
zo-kup is served, which consists of cooked rice, pork, and two chickens, one of which is eaten by the bridegroom and the other by the bride's attendants.

Early the next morning the party returns to the boy's home. It is now augmented by the bride and her attendants, who are as follows:

Kegu Numbu:	He is the leader of the bride's party and should be an elderly and experienced man. The office is usually performed by some near relative.
Rum fat-bo:	A sacrificer. He makes the necessary offerings to the gods and is usually a Mun.
Aku:	The bride's younger paternal uncle.
Ajyong:	One or other of the bride's mother's brothers.
Changku:	Some elderly friend of the family and preferably a man of standing in the village. His duties are to prepare and distribute the meat at the wedding feast.
Nyom Moo:	One or other of the bride's mother's sisters.
Nyom Chimbu:	Bridesmaid. The bride's sister often undertakes this duty; but she must be unmarried.
Nyom Faming:	Bride's brother: younger, if possible. He represents all her male relatives.
Faming Tyol:	Male attendant upon the *Nyom Faming*.

In addition to the above there are also a number of men to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after." When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook Zo*, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to everybody present; but each member of the bride's party receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot such members of the party as are still capable of walking now proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of argument now follows, in which various men express their opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side. He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom.*

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi.* Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu,* or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku,* who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong,* which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len,* which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[262]

3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought con-
[431] tributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

R. DE NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ
Kalimpong, Bengal

224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple. or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the
ptso was going through the forest when he came on what he
thought was a dead bear ; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of
hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his
incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate
part of it ; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said,
'You have eaten part of my body ; henceforward you and your
children must serve me and worship me and make offerings
to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat
all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason
why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these
legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing,
gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food
and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game,
and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are
looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following
story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who
hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this
theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [538]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly
I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull
was asleep ; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified
me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as
if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting
god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds.
The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing
drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyous-
782 faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of
[241 Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley,
776] wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share
[844] this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse
[786 between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on in-
833] cestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom
171] which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or
[362] a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must
[815] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples
771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a
793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were
824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the
825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even
222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will
261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water
[273] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another
252 root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared,
262 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[288] partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the
292 woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her
[301] neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common
[283] dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun
[231] from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

262 In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal
[484] food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and
[263] dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is
[276] never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

[264] They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots
415 of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to be paid or received; one or two friends may come in to drink *chi* and everybody will sit around and gossip, or perhaps one will tell one of the long stories which take several evenings to repeat. The younger children can listen to the conversation if they wish to; if not they can go and amuse themselves; very little notice is taken of them, and, except possibly for malicious gossip, no subject is avoided because of their presence. A few people own oil lamps, but for the majority the only illumination is the wood-fire. A couple of hours after the evening meal the bedding is brought out of the boxes where it is stored during the day and laid out with the more or less padded wooden pillows at the appropriate places round the walls. People sleep on a cloth, generally quilted, and have another blanket as covering; Lepchas never sleep with their heads under the bedclothes as they think they would then suffocate.

When the bedding is laid out the fire is damped down with ashes and darkness is presumed to reign; people undress more or less, according to their personal habits (most adults remove their outer clothes and sleep in their drawers, but some, especially poorer people who have not sufficient coverings, retain the formerly general habit of sleeping naked near the fire) and settle down in their proper sleeping places for the night. Everybody has his own mattress, but married couples share pillows and blankets. The smallest infants sleep in their mother's arms; but as soon as they are big enough they are given their own bedding, for fear they should wet their parents'. Occasionally a child is placed between husband and wife, but more usually on the far side of the wife. An only or youngest child may sleep beside its parents until it is ten or eleven, but if a younger sibling is born it is placed to sleep either with an elder sibling or some older relation, often a widowed aunt or grandmother. A child usually sleeps in an elder person's arms till about the age of eight, after which, except in the very poorest familes, it usually gets its own bedding; but until marriage unmarried siblings of the same sex usually have their beds laid side by side. Children must always respect their grandparents' bedding, and in the day-time the place where it is laid; and adults must respect the bedding and sleeping-places of their parents-in-law.

Once the fire is damped down and the bedding laid out people are presumed to be invisible and inaudible; but this is merely a social convention, and people can and do tell in the greatest detail just what goes on in the night. Occasionally a young man may wait till everybody else is asleep, and then creep out on hands and knees

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never
eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain
will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg
liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is
pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce
is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very
strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative
effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called
Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece
of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the
supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according
to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and
[846] more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong
chi is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given
to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To
prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks
and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered
with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being
stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all
the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom
of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary.
When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo
mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all
over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken;
the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket
which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The
basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or
three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation
becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the
forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is trans-
ferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire
on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is
better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

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[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [624] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[6] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[6] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven. 776 779

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites. 779 [756 764]

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist 756 793 578 [273]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273 cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862] hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink 262 on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302] intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273] usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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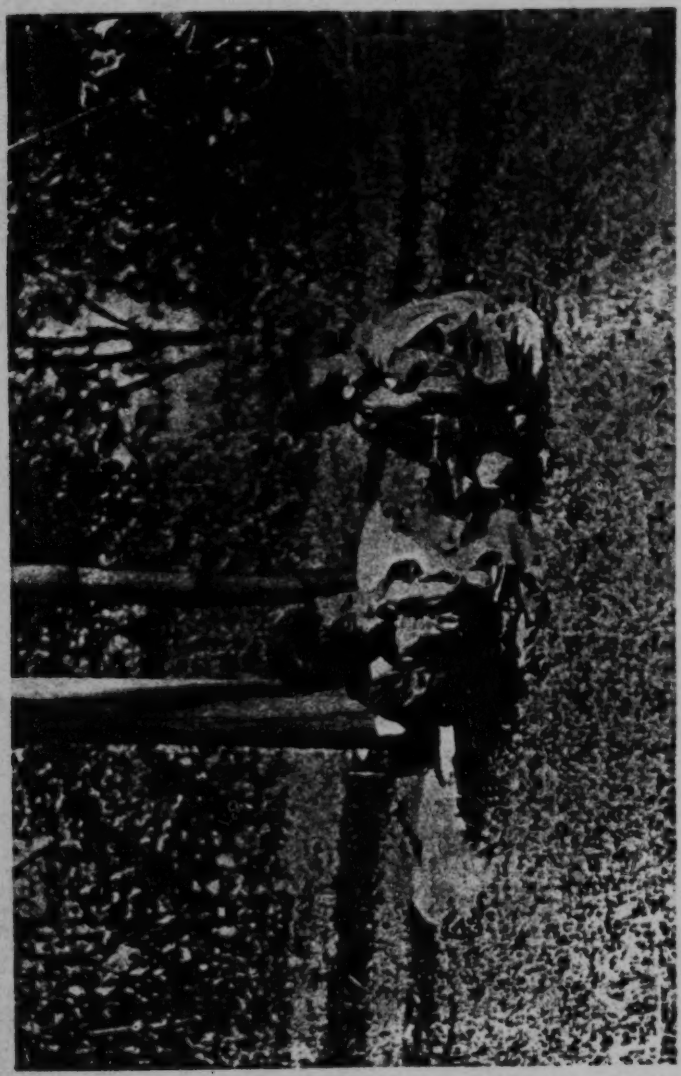

THE POT OF *CHI* FOR THE TODDLERS IS SET INTO THE GROUND WELL AWAY FROM THE GROWN-UPS

[Facing p. 272]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

three days; on the fourth day I said "It is only fair we should take it in turns; I will take yours to-day and you take mine to-morrow." On the morrow I brought a leaf and shat on it and told the other to take it away. He refused, whereupon I said "If you won't throw it away it will stay there." After some argument the other threw it away and did not play tricks on me again.' 159x 522

Relations with Mother.

'From time to time I used to go home and see Mother and help her and take her presents of the food and things I had saved at Passo's; they were rich, Mother was poor. Passo and his wife dressed me in second-hand clothes and gave me an old knife; they said I did not work well enough and cloth was too expensive to give me new clothes. 159x

'When I was with Passo I was treated very badly, I had to do all the chores and work and was given bad food and no *chi*[7] while they sat at ease and ate and drank all day. When I was eight I was so unhappy that I ran away to my Mother; but she beat me and sent me back to my adopting parents. I ran away again when I was fifteen; this time Mother kept me nine days and then sent me back with a present of a load of *chi*.'

Onset of Padem Rum.

'When I was ten I was sent by Passo together with Cherim and Sanam to my Mother's father to fetch buckwheat. I was meant to carry twenty measures but could only manage fifteen. The two elder men were given *chi* and rice but I was merely given buckwheat cake. On the way home the Padem attacked me; I could not see properly and felt as though my body were being poked with sticks; I kept on thinking of drinking *chi* and eating rice like my companions had. I managed to get home with the buckwheat. My adopting parents did not look any bigger than myself.' (*For three months he was ill with constant derangements of vision.*) 'A chilli looked as big as a melon, a pumpkin looked like an umbrella. At times I felt as though I was flying or sitting on trees, at times my body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs.

[7] Kurma used to get much more easily drunk than other Lepchas of his age, and I wonder whether this is due to the fact that he was not accustomed to *chi* in childhood. [273]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pōn-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pōn-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chötembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

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415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273] ●
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-
born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556
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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has [177] struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's [781] ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth- 273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had [534] instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated 587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of [373] small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against [752]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks, maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137] plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone, or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman; there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden caps.—Analyst]

539 **En Ye!**

Mo-tan-chi Ñoń kup ńun non bin	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-li-non po-hong yit duk hań sa	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsum* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsum po-nig duk kań sa pa-s'or boń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Y'ú duk hang sa Ñoń kup gum yoń s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

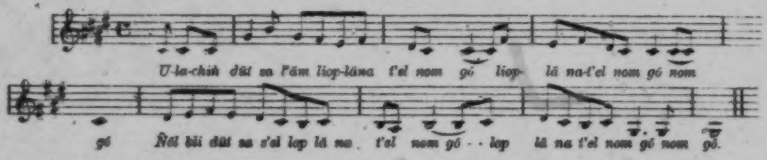
[574] [273]

III.

U-la-duń dût.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duń dût sa-l'ám liop-lá na-t'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
*Ñál-bli dût sa-s'el " " "

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 354.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice. [515]

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the 273
sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of 796
millet. The second is Dyō, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dōn-dyō-chi-log, who [776]
is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is 773
of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset 273
the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was 796
brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 246.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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273 796 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 273 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious effects : for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 353.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796 estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [171] Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796 to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782 his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773 ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 160 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[778] the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 388.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 178.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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171 Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

273 A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyö, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

273 The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high
171 rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 62, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.
82. X, 34. 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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potent that it even brought about immortality.[84] The motif of "Medicine of Immortality" which is widely circulated through the whole of Asia is an effective argument in this case. According to this, Soma was a kind of medicinal plant which grew in the highest mountains.

In those early days, no Indo-Aryans lived in this mountain world. It is more probable that from the very early time they obtained medicinal roots and herbs from the inhabitants of the mountains. In the Atharvaveda it is said, "The young maid of the Kirati race, a young damsel, digs the drug ; digs it with shovels wrought of gold on the high ridges of the hills."[85] The Kirati however are a people related to the Tibetans, as we shall see later on, and their name is identical with the Rai as we have mentioned above. The expression "kirata-tikta" occurs in Sanskrit and means "A very bitter medicinal plant." The name is preserved in the Prakrit as Cilaa-itta or Ciraa-itta ; in Old-Bengal as Cirayita and in New-Bengal as Cirata or Cireta. It certainly means "Medicine of the Kirata."[86] The Soma plant and its juice were equally bitter. It is reported that the Kirati provided the Aryans with Soma plants. If they grew in the high Himalayan mountains there was certainly no other way of obtaining the plants except through the natives who had a knowledge of medicinal herbs.

It is naturally impossible to produce a commonly used popular drink from a rare plant which had to be transported from a great distance. Oldenberg raises the same question from an altogether different point of view, "Has Soma ever been a favourite drink in the daily life of the Aryans? I doubt it...In the Veda, Soma certainly was not a favourite drink, and it seems to me that the Avestic sources also teach this. The real intoxicating drink in the ordinary life of the ancient Indian peoples was sura...

Sura was put to sacred use at the ceremonies of the Sautramani as also of the Vajaya."[87] Even the Soma sacrifices were not numerous, or greater quantities of Soma plants would

84. op. cit. I; 91, 6 ; VIII, 48, 3 ; IX, 113, 8.
85. S. K. Chatterji, Kirata-Jana-Krti, Journal R. A. S. B. Vol. XVI, 1950. No. 2. p. 162.
86. op. cit. p. 163.
87. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 366.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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273 171 have been used. "Only for a few, the celebrations of the Soma sacrifice could have been possible; where it was celebrated it could only have had for the masses of the people at most, the character of an incomprehensible play which they watched; the functions leaving the onlookers unmoved."[88] A drink so easily obtained and in general use, would not have so easily been linked with the "Drink of Immortality."

The Soma plants were ground down according to primitive methods on a stone plate by means of a stone, and later crushed in a stone mortar.[89] Then the juice was squeezed out. This juice was of a brownish, reddish, or greeny-yellowish colour. To purify this juice it was run through a strainer made of sheep's wool.[90] The Iranians used a strainer made of hair from the holy white bull. During the process three priests chant a monotonous hymn. The juice was very frequently mixed with water, milk or sour milk.[91]

It was poured back and forth into different barrels. All the manipulations would certainly cause the fermentation of the juice, as it did have an intoxicating effect.[92]

All this goes to show that Soma was quite a rare intoxicating drink. The ordinary intoxicant of the ancient Indians was Sura, which was also used for the purpose of the sacrifice. Here, too, we have an exact parallel with the Lepchas;—millet beer, Chi, is the ordinary stimulant which is generally used for the sacrificial purpose as it is easily obtained. Dyö is made from medicinal roots and is of a brownish colour. The alcohol content is high like some of our modern liqueurs. Because of the rarity of the roots, Dyö is not often manufactured and is less frequently used in sacrifices. Soma must have been extracted from some similar medicinal root. The Himalayan peoples gave it to the Aryans and handed over to them the recipe for making it.

This of course does not prove that the sacrifice of the intoxicating drink was introduced by the Aryans in this manner.

88. op. cit. p. 440 sq.
89. Rigveda IX, 67, 19, 107, 10; I, 28, 1-3.
90. Rigveda IX. 69, 9.
91. Rigveda VII. 3, 6.
92. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 457 sq., S. K. Godivala, Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1925, p. 5. sq.

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"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance. 273 171

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. 773 We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple.

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, 773 closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow 171 away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 160.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immense forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the
292 woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her
[301] neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common
[283] dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun
[231] from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

262 In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can
[484] find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and
[263] dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is
[276] never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

[264] They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots
415 of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

[71] * Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

[813] † Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

I: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent [136 137] up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sǎ lí*). It is
411 always made of bamboo, with a string (*sǎ lí grím*) made either of
[283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kŭ ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kǎ fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pŭn hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
● 278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pǎ kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

the poison is prepared only shortly before the hunt begins. The root is ground between two stones and then some water is added to form a thick paste. Lepcha hunters are very careful in handling aconite and should their hands show even a small cut caused during house or field work, they will refrain from using the poison on this day. Should an animal be killed by a poisoned missile, the hunter will wait until the body of the prey has grown cold — »the poison returns then from the heart to the wound« — and afterwards that part of the body, which had been wounded is cut off and thrown away.

Hunting weapons

Four different kinds of bow are used by the Lepchas:

1. The hunting bow in the average 140 cms long. This type of bow was also used in warfare.
2. A bow, in the average 180 cms long, used in marksmanship. The central part of the bow's shaft (*pyăng shing*) is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo, cut in a typical Lepcha design and fastened to the rod of the bow by resin and strings. The arrows, used for this bow, have a simple, conical iron point without barbs.
3. *Da bryó să lí*, pellet bow, in the average 150 cms long, used for killing birds. The centre of the bow's rod is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo. Four small, flat slivers of bamboo are bound together in the middle of the bow-string to form a small square, upon which a clay-ball (*da bryó*) can be placed. This central piece of the bow-string is called *să lí bryeng*. The bow-string is fastened to the shaft of the bow in such a way, that it remains slightly turned to the right, allowing the missile to fly past the bow and the hand which holds it. — The clay-balls, used for the *da bryó să lí* are usually burned to make them harder. The pellet bow can be seen very frequently in use during harvest time, when the fields have to be guarded against birds.

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in the wall, into which a huge, narrow-woven basket is placed. A beating line is then formed and the fish are driven into the trap.

At a favourable spot, by diverting a river into a channel and then erecting barriers of sand and stone, a small artificial lake is made in the old river bed. Afterwards, huge quantities of *a'ung el* (*Artemisia vulgaris*) are collected, placed into the lake and pounded. Then cut pieces of a strong creeper (*brŭng*) are thrown into the pool, and the juice of these plants disolving in the water will poison all the fish which had been trapped in the artificially made lake.

All the catch, obtained by collective methods of fishing, is eventually divided equally among the participants.

NOTES

1. About the Lepchas see the following publications:

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de Beauvoir-Stocks, C., Folk-lore and Customs of the Lep-chas of Sikhim. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Proceedings. Calcutta 1925

Gorer, G., Himalayan Village. London 1938.

Morris, J., Living with Lepchas. London 1938.

de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. and Gorer, G., The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha Lamaist Ceremonies. Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV, No. 2. Lucknow 1951.

de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R., Ancient Funeral Ceremonies of the Lepchas. Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. V, No. 1. Lucknow 1951.

2. The rites and beliefs, connected with Lepcha hunting and fishing, will be dealt with later in a separate publication.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly
[278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are 278
well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a [411]
deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrow head but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, "Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from [439]
Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear [640]
them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the [226]
gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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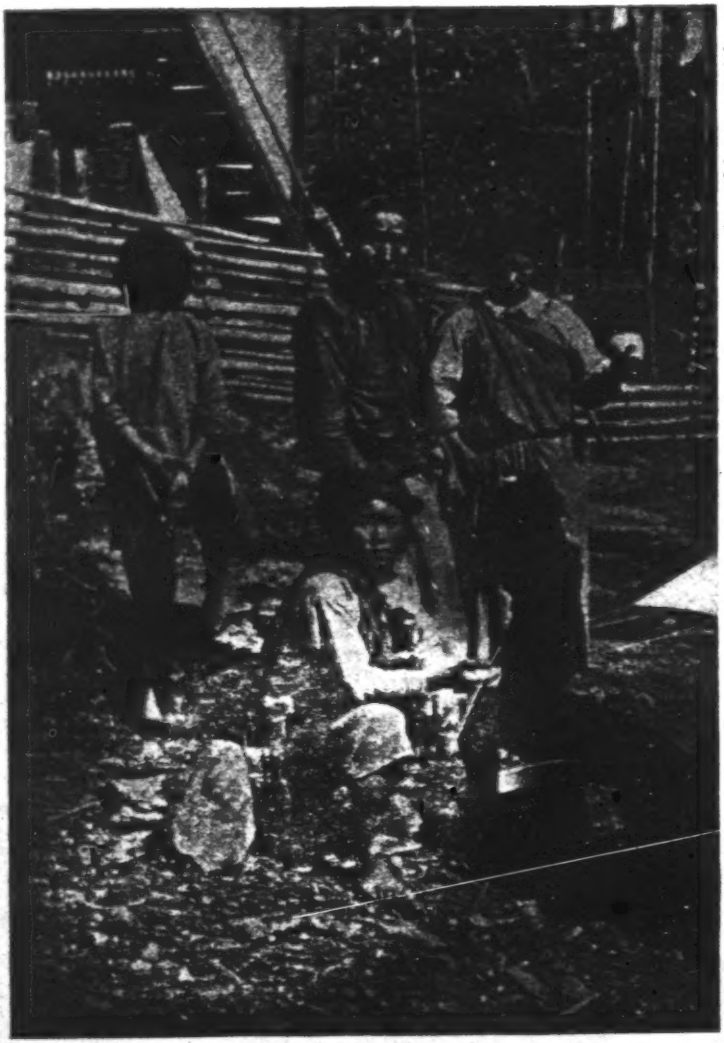

MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

411 The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sä li*). It is always made of bamboo, with a string (*sä li grim*) made either of the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kü ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kä fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pön bróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pä kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Lepcha boy.

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"A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in"; being otherwise a candid portrait of the author. *(Photograph by F. S. Smythe, reproduced by permission of the Mount Everest Committee, 1936).*

[facing p. 30]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyen and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Happy family.

[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
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Tafoor's two daughters.

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Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539
mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581
you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773
like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285] such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285] special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [illegible]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number
291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there.
[75] Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty [556] of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

223 troughs, filled with water, over springs, where birds come to drink or on the tops of trees.

224 An automatic spear trap (*sa lak*) is used for killing deer and sometimes a number of such traps are set, should a man-eating tiger roam around a settlement. In this case, people are warned to stay in the houses until the hunters have removed the traps again. The spear-traps are set with great care and at a certain hight, the hunter calculating the size of the tiger from its footprints. The spear-trap is made as follows: A huge bamboo tube is cut lengthwise and firmly fixed at a certain height and position with the help of several bamboo supports. Then a long piece of bamboo is fastened horizontally above the ground — at the same height of the bamboo tube — and bent strongly backwards until one end of it reaches the bamboo tube, where it is then held in its spanned position by means of a simple cock. A string is fastened to the latter and stretched low across the jungle path. At last a strong piece of bamboo, the front-end of which has been cut to a sharp point and usually poisoned, is placed in the tube as a missile. — Usually another string, also connected with the cock, is spanned breast high and further away in the direction from which a man might approach. If somebody then stumbles unaware into the trap, the missile is released beforehand without causing harm.

A small cross-bow trap (*sä lak tyäk*) is used for killing rats. It consists of a miniature cross-bow which aims into a bamboo tube, closed at its further end. The bow-string is cocked over one end of a movable bamboo stick, the other end of it, to which some bait is attached, reaching into the bamboo tube. By a slight pull at the bait, the stick, which holds back the bow-string, is moved and the arrow thus released. — It may be mentioned in this connection that poisoned food is also often laid out for killing rats, mice and other animals, who harm the crops.

223 Jungle fowl is sometimes caught with the help of a tent-like net.
286 Its top is loosely hung up on a branch and its sides are fastened to the ground. On one side only, an entrance is left by lifting the flap

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223 bait on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself 286 in a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits the stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or he simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from the branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224 by a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the cooperation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pitfalls (*tüng bóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made of a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824] constructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the latter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino would habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters claim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and easily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door was constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages with trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys who cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of hunters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a cliff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the wild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the spikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a line of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas fear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and become a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226 to a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

226 serves only to supply some food in addition to that obtained by tilling the fields and raising cattle. The following fishing devices are used by the Lepchas:

An ordinary fishing rod (*vór ham*) of bamboo, with a string and an iron hook (*vór*), upon which a bait is placed. — Similar to this is a simple device, certainly more ancient, called *hryeng*. Here the hook is substituted by a short, sharp piece of bamboo, which gets stuck in the throat of the fish.

Sometimes, a series of baited hooks is immersed in a river. The end of every line is wound around heavy stones lying on the bank and each string is then bent to form a sharp angle, being held in this position by a small stone. Should a fish get caught, the line will be moved out of its position and the fisherman who after some time comes to control the trap will thus recognize that a fish has been hooked.

226 Various kinds of nets, mostly made of the fibres of creeper plants, 286 are used; the most frequent type of net is the so-called *sŭng lí*, a conical throwing net. When spread out it is in the average some 140 cms high and its diameter measures approximately 160 cms. Around its opening, oblong pieces of lead are fastened and a long, strong rope is attached to its upper part. The fisherman, standing in the river, winds the rope loosely over his arm and then at a favourable moment throws the net quickly over the fish.

226 *Tŭk shor*: A simple bamboo trap, in the average some 60 cms long and 30 cms in diameter. To construct this device, a strong piece of bamboo is cut lengthwise, to three quarters of its total length, into a great number of sections. These sections are then bent apart and held in this position by a woven bamboo ring, the trap thus taking the form of a funnel. — Usually, several *tŭk shor* are placed in a row, near a stony barrier in the river, where fish are likely to jump and might thus fall into the trap, fig. 1.

Kŭr vyo: A pocket, made of bamboo; also the *kŭr vyo* is fastened to a barrier in the river, to catch the fish who are trying to jump the obstacle.

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum [Museum für Völkerkunde] in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff [Butterstampfer], baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet ●286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 778 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused [783 785] cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A [779] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber ● 289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with 351 fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) 794 which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather
startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange
projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at
every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for
it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number.
It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I
had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the
English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical
with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several
fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen,
which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of
ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks'
feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon
designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams
above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded
me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pan-
tomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de
Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was
put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep,
was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly
gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning
we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-
bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its
solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to
exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

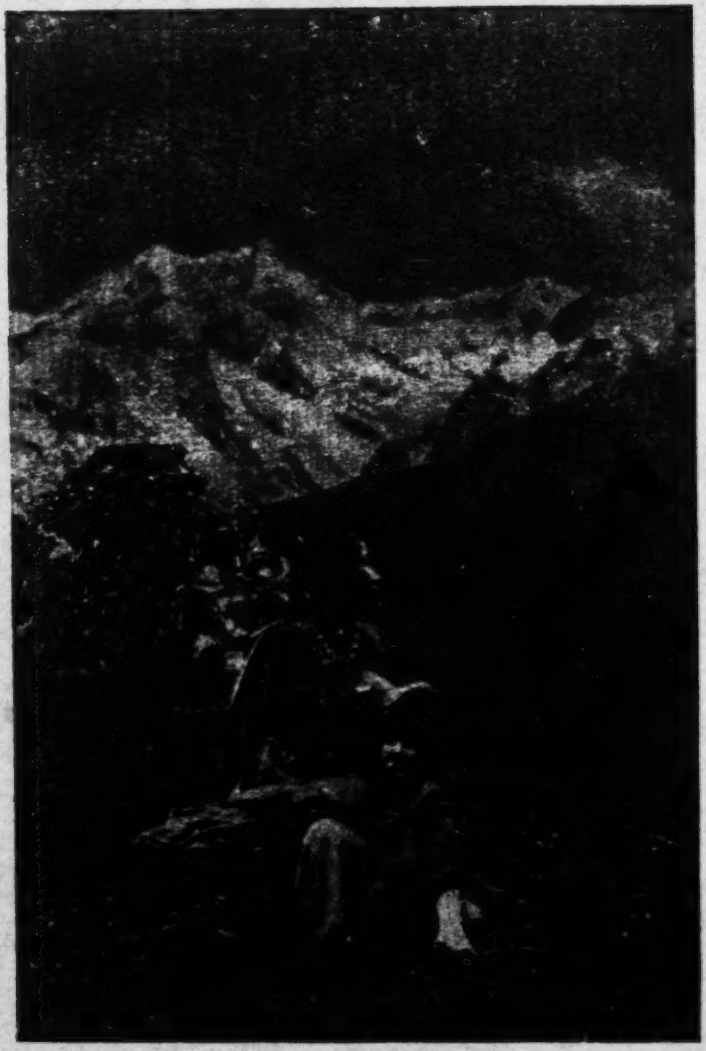
According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 1

291
301
853



MRS. TAFOOR NURSING HER YOUNGEST DAUGHTER:
BEHIND KINCHENJUNGA

[Frontispiece]
[Facing p. 5]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour
[141] would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and
302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also
● 291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men
142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

1. Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-ku* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number

291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
[751] the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there. Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHALA MANDAL, THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE

TEMPA, THE DEPOSED MUKTAIR

[Facing p. 128]

142
622
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[636]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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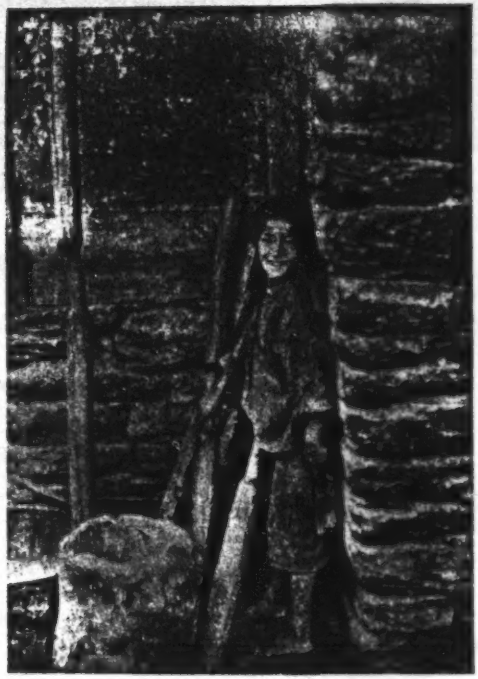
NINETY - YEAR - OLD SERVING, THE OLDEST MAN IN LINGTHEM

[facing p. 136]

TAKNEUM *YOUMI*, WHO ATE BOAR-PIG

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



CHÉLÉ, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY HIS AUNT

PATEK, THE HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD OF SIX AT 17. WITH HIM PONGRING, THE MONASTERY GUARDIAN

[facing p. 160]

[412]

142
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I: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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291

(*a*) LUMBA *CHITHEMBU*
(*b*) JIROONG *CHÉNÉ* IN TIBETAN HAT
(*c*) SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON WITH THE HAT OF HIS RANK

(*d*) THE PAINTER MONK, LHARIBU CHUJEN OF PANUNG
(*e*) ASHYOK *YOUMI*, WEARING THE OLD-FASHIONED WOVEN LEPCHA HAT

[facing p. 192]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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MONASTERY FEAST

[facing p. 256]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

WOMEN PREPARE FOOD

Chlaa Mandal's two wives winnow rice on the balcony of their house.

Mrs. Gongyop and Mrs. Chano join together to pound rice in the courtyard. Behind, a dog has got on to the balcony, where it has no right to be.

[Facing p. 264]

252
291

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

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[facing p. 288]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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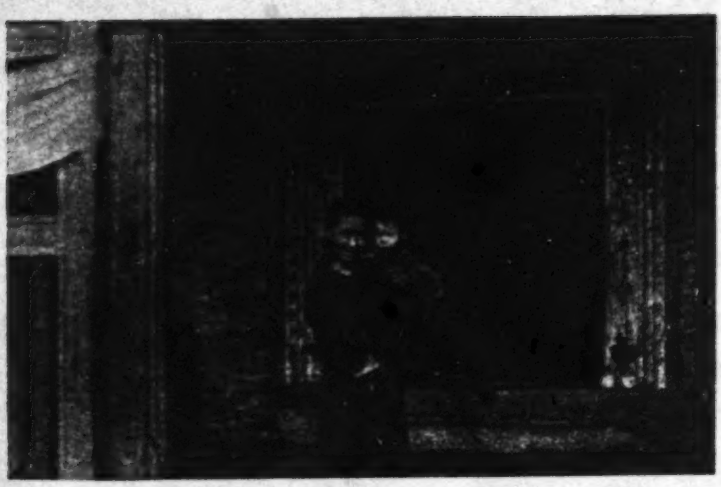

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

[facing p. 294]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

METHODS OF CARRYING CHILDREN

Tafoor and his youngest daughter: Jiroong behind.

Tafoor's two middle daughters.

[facing p. 304]

854
142
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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857

MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

583
584
291
342
417

MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÊK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

F 320

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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585

[415]

ONGDEN'S WEDDING

Above : Ongden in a clean dress. Behind him old Adér.

Below : The feast.

[facing p. 336]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[52]
[732]

Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)

Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[Facing p. 368]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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KURMA GYAPÖN

[facing p. 384]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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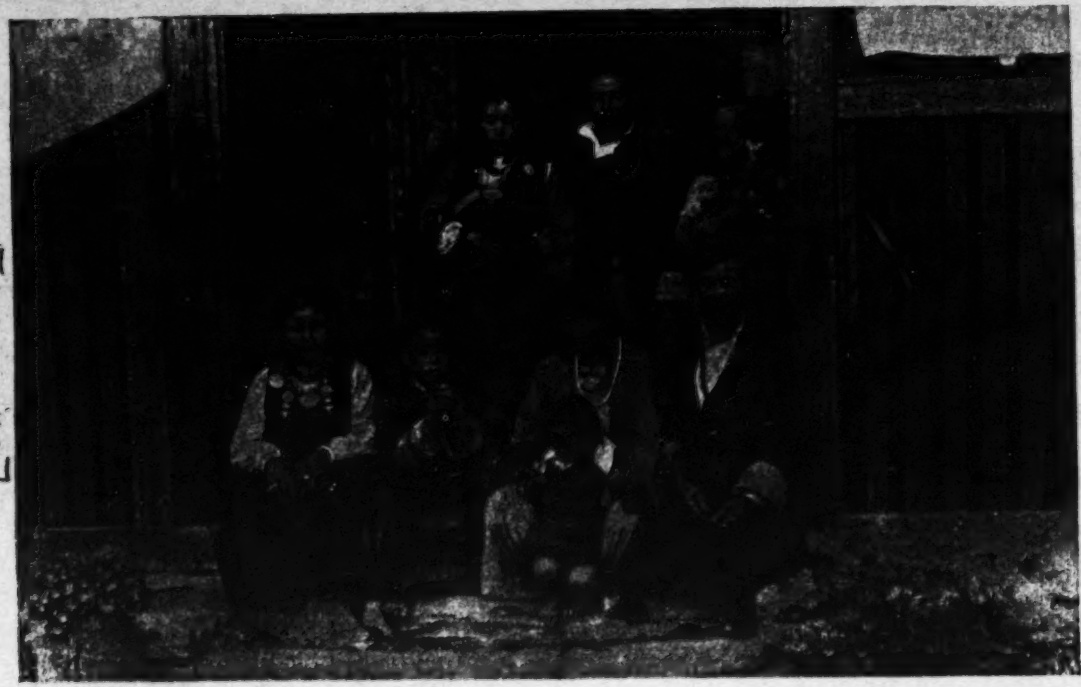
[301]

MRS. DATOOP

PICHI

[Facing p. 416]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



THE DATOOP FAMILY IN THE DOORWAY OF THE LHA-GONG

Standing : Mrs. Pembu, Pembu, Kondé (a " niece " ; I have just bandaged her).

Seated : The younger married daughter, Kolok Tyong, the youngest son, Mrs. Datoop with Pembu's son Dugoo, and Datoop.

[facing p. 420]

142 291 301

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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417
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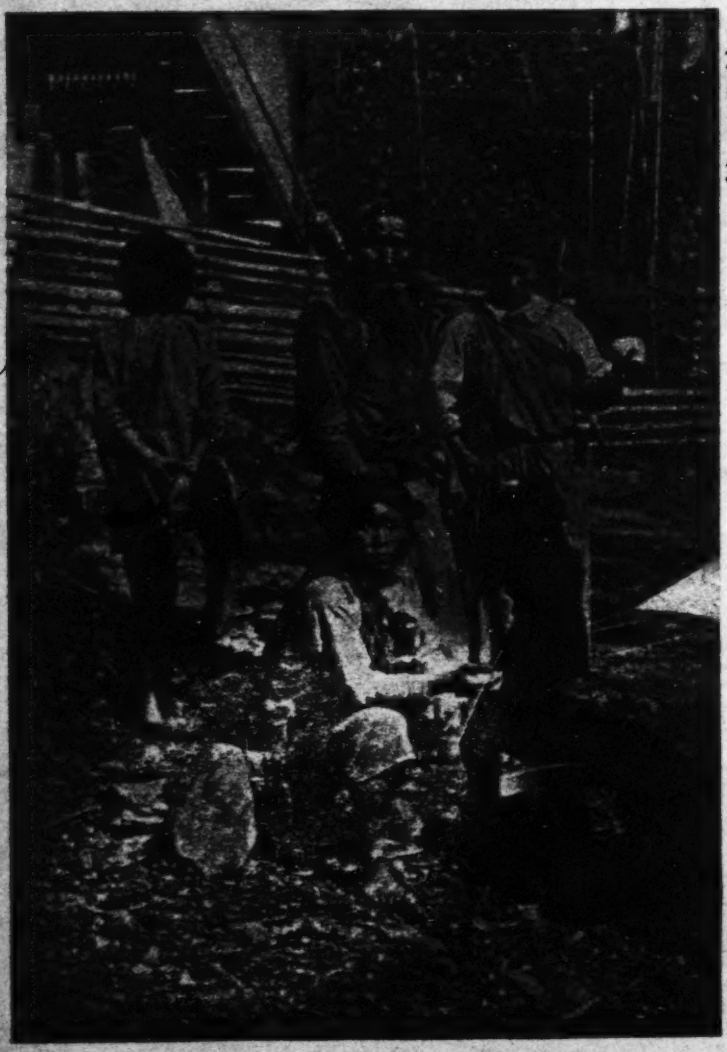

MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755
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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

[facing p. 476]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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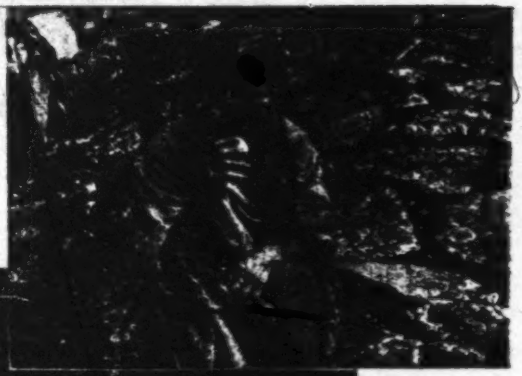
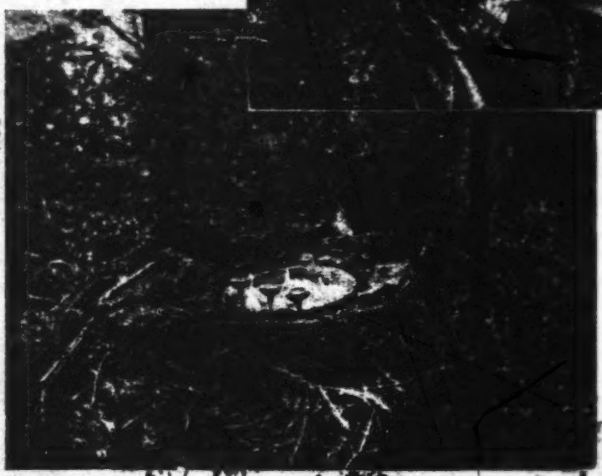


The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

778
415
285



The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

782
291

Kahlyeu and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering

[facing p. 4]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291

Tempa.

Grandfather.

[facing p. 16]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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888
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142

Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

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[facing p. 22]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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284

Lepcha boy.

000

"A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in": being otherwise a candid portrait of the author. (*Photograph by F. S. Smythe, reproduced by permission of the Mount Everest Committee, 1936*).

[Facing p. 30]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
346

Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

142
291

Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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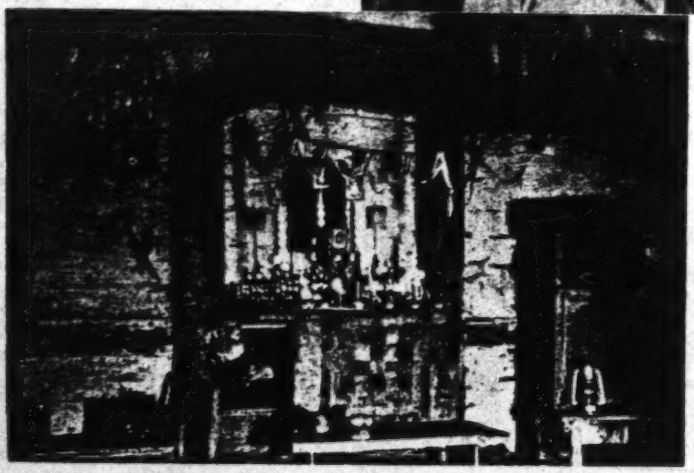

[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Tafoor.

Chötembu.

[facing p. 85]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [391]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[21]

[415]

Conversation piece

[Facing p. 96]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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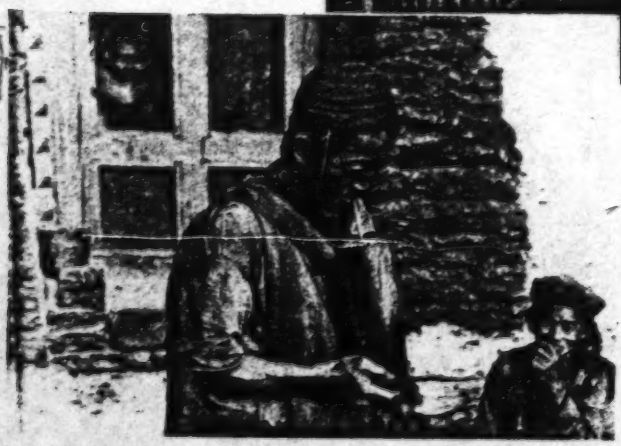
On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chötembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-La'ma. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
273
415]



The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[441
622]

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756
755
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415

The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
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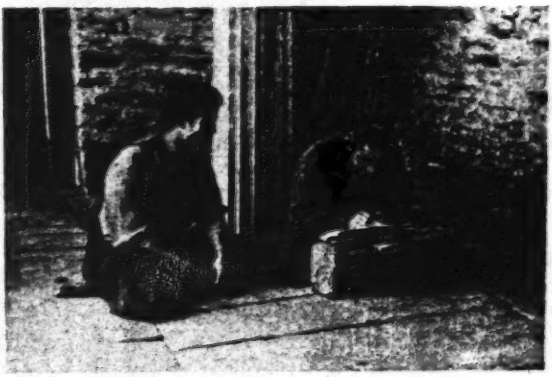
Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."



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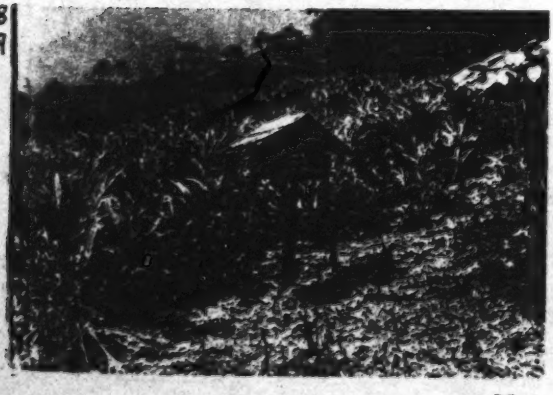


A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342
351
133

Typical Lepcha homestead.

241
291

Sowing dry rice.

342
356
417
291

Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to 766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone 415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

● 291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made [439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and [438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [773]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*,
with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142
[531
34]

Happy family.

285

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142

[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

335
301

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p.211]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142

231
351
482
142
291

Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Askyak*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

[Facing p. 226]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291

Karma.

142
291
531
415
824

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142

Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

342
571
415
351
291
285
417
481

Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796
291
[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

[533
45
352]

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
346]

At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 274]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, [185] that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes 439 every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [291] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796
●291

The return of the *Beom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

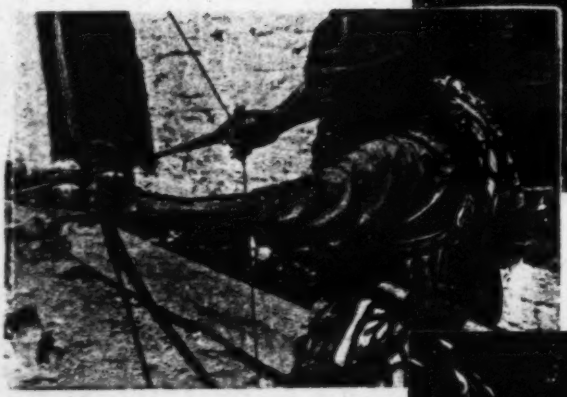
[FACING p.291]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491

A Lepcha bridge.

411
291
142



Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOOTIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

●291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.

411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [434]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 opposed to the views of Mr. RISLEY [1]), Colonel DALTON [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers DRS. CAMPBELL and HOOKER, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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[142]
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A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. HOFFMANN).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1891, IV. p. 5.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Fig. 21, The cattle sacrifice

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291 ●
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[177] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[868] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[177] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

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19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

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Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

22. Lepcha hunter

[End Plate 8]

[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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27. Lepcha farmer winnowing rice

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28. Lepcha shepherd with rain-cap

[End Plate 10]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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33. Lepcha woman

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34. Lepcha woman

[End Plate 13]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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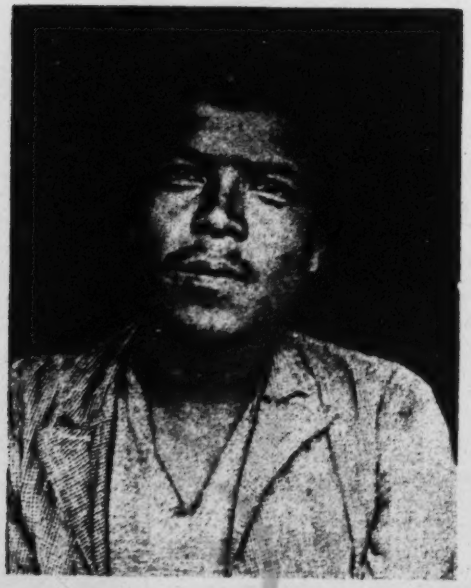
35. Lepcha young woman



36. Lepcha young man

[End Plate 14]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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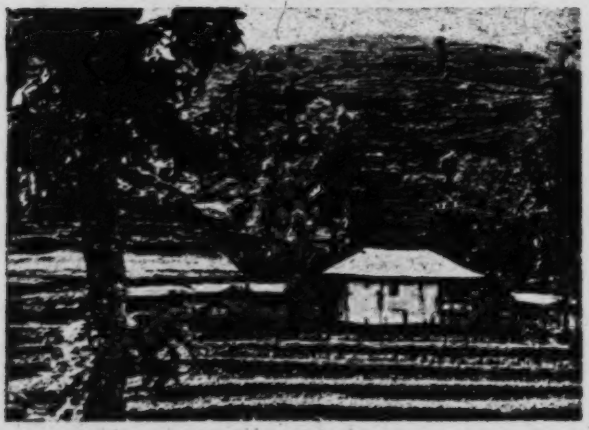

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

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42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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43. Lepcha girl carrying a baby

[302]

44. Lepcha girl

[End Plate 18]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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45. Lepcha man

46. Lepcha man

[End Plate 19]

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet

Lepchu AK5

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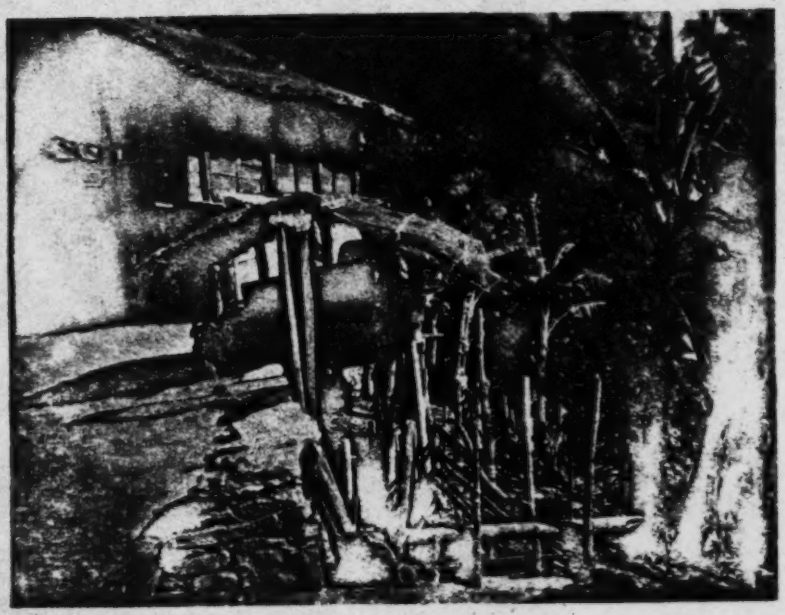

Lepcha house in a forest in Sikkim

291

A Lepcha

Facing P.6

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.

[341]
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793

[facing p. 200]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 are men; of these three were first of all Padem. Kurma is Padem only; he can diagnose but can only perform a few sacrifices and exorcisms.

The other two groups of possessed priests resemble one another and differ from Mun and Padem in so far as neither can make sacrifices nor perform exorcisms, but can merely get possessed by supernaturals; they dance until the supernatural speaks through [292] them and discloses its wants and whereabouts. Both wear special clothes for their performances: the Yaba (women are called Yama) wear bandoliers of tinkling bells and have their clothes fringed with bells; they hold a metal plate and beat it as they dance. Pau (women are called Nandjému) wear elaborate wool head-dresses and dance with a skull-drum in one hand and a bell in the other. Both Yaba and Pau are and have been very rare because the possessing spirits are not Lepcha but have been introduced through intermarriage with foreign women, the Yaba spirit comes from Limbu women (the Limbu are a Nepali tribe) and the Pau from Sikkimese-Tibetans. There is a tradition that there is a similar spirit called Jhankri belonging to the Chetri,[2] but this spirit has never manifested itself among the Lepchas as there has been no inter-marriage between the two groups.

There is only one representative of this group in Lingthem: the 'elder grandmother' of Patek, an old woman over seventy, is a Nandjému. The service of these diviners is only called in when lama and Mun fail to agree on a diagnosis, or when there is reason to suppose that a new devil has taken up its abode in the neighbourhood. In such cases a Pau or Yaba, usually from another village, will be called in to discover its home and its needs.

754 It is believed that there are two sorts of Mun, a good group
756 called Tang-li Mun and a bad group called Mun-mook Mun; the difference is similar to the traditional difference between white and black magicians. 'Mun-mook Mun are like thieves: they think and do evil and are possessed by devils which they employ for their own selfish ends; they alone can send devils (the term used for sorcery).' They are believed to have an influence like the evil

Pumri (wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon), the elder wife of Lumba *chithembu* (she is the daughter of Pumri and has the paternal spirit) the 'younger grandmother' of Patek, and the sister of Jiroong (the wife of Kaji). All four women practise.

[2] This Lepcha tradition is incorrect: the Chetri are a fairly pure Hindu tribe; the Jhankri occur among the Gurung.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[431] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[243] matters. He is permitted to beat other Lamas, and also laymen who are slack in the performance of their duties, not excluding even the Dorje-Lopön, or head of the monastery. It may be noted, however, that he has no authority to beat people once they have left the monastery or its grounds.

The next rank is known as *Umzet*. This, too, necessitates a big feast, which is generally attended by the whole village and lasts from two to three days. An Umzet teaches but has no authority to beat people. He is really under-study to the head of the monastery, and is usually not advanced to this rank unless it is considered that he is capable eventually of succeeding his master.

Dorje-Lopön is the highest rank of all, and there is usually one at the head of every monastery, though in Lingtem there are two. In addition to the usual feast each Lama and every householder in the village presents a woven scarf to the Dorje-Lopön. He is not required to keep all these scarves and generally sells them again at half their usual price. Thus, people who do not bring one with them to the ceremony may buy one from the Dorje-Lopön himself and re-present it, so that the offering really turns into a kind of cash transaction. There is no limit to the number of each rank of Lama in any particular monastery, and in practice the senior Dorje-Lopön, should there be more than one, is the titular head, the actual power being usually in the hands of some more active member of the community, more often than not the Umzet, as was the case in Lingtem. For the performance of actual [242] ceremonies most of the Lamas wear the usual maroon robe as worn by Lamas in Tibet. Unlike that country, however, there are here no differences in dress by which a Lama's rank may be recognised.

In addition to the Lamas there are also in Lingtem a number of nuns, or *Inebu*, as they are called. In Tibet, while female Lamas are given a very inferior position, scarcely higher than lay devotees, they are required to practise chastity, and usually live an ascetic life in remote and lonely convents. There is one such place at Tatsang, on the road to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their
faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
[292] similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which
was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge
yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese
mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appear-
ance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns
turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to
converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and
contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them
were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

[788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
793] twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her
why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora ciburia*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
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[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

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793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
tease the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling), nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa). All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

755
On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with 782
water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his [778
back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier 776]
with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the
cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl- [824
gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" 293]
which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior.
He then summons the god and when the branches move to [787]
and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-
thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt);
tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering!
Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to
be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt
Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.) [776]

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam 755
yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) 782
this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke
of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money
Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu.
I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the
rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense
offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic
formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miä
song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen
chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [80]

[539]

60. sa her rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyär pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dzän dong däm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzän dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu däm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzän dong hiu däm dong hiu o! ön sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miä song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dūn, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mōn, his wife, Ta-dik-kōb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 1

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MRS. TAFOOR NURSING HER YOUNGEST DAUGHTER:
BEHIND KINCHENJUNGA

[Frontispiece]
[Facing p. 5]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

● 301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels [556] are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 342 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought 592 up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301]

MRS. DATOOP

PICHI

[Facing p. 416]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE DATOOP FAMILY IN THE DOORWAY OF THE LHA-GONG

Standing : Mrs. Pembu, Pembu, Kondé (a " niece " ; I have just bandaged her).

Seated : The younger married daughter, Kolok Tyong, the youngest son, Mrs. Datoop with Pembu's son Dugoo, and Datoop.

[facing p. 420]

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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142

Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

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[facing p. 22]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chōtembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[21]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[facing p. 96]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
212
142
291

Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

778
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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142
[531
341]

Happy family.

[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[335
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p.211]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778
776
301
532

Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 275]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOOTIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [139]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen; thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named: amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

●301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[168] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[177] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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33. Lepcha woman

142
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34. Lepcha woman

[End Plate 13]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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302

35. Lepcha young woman

36. Lepcha young man

[End Plate 14]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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43. Lepcha girl carrying a baby

[302]

44. Lepcha girl

[End Plate 18]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour
[141] would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and
302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also
291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men
142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

132 During the rest of the year it falls intermittently, and in the full monsoon period, June to September, almost continuously. Owing to the precipitous nature of the land water does not lie, and the ground will be dry within six hours of a heavy downpour. In Zongu there are a great number of mountain streams running down from the snows to the rivers.

The temperature varies very considerably at the different heights. Only once in this century has snow fallen down by the river; that was in 1906. Above about 8,000 feet snow lies regularly every year, and there are often powderings of snow down to about 4,000 feet, the level of most of the houses; but the presence of oranges and peaches suggests that at this level snow and frost are neither severe nor continuous. Except for the warm and clammy monsoon period, when dysentery epidemics are liable to break out, the weather is generally cool on the habitation level, and there is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. Judging from the weather I did experience and the comparisons made I should say that the mean temperature varies between about 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter to about 86 in summer. It follows that clothes are very necessary for warmth.

291 Both men and women wear thin knee-length drawers, and on the upper body a shirt; men's shirts are slightly shorter. Over this women also wear a sort of bodice made out of a thin material, formerly obtained from Assam through Bhutan. The original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material, fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash and reaching to the knees. The colouring of this sash has a certain significance, those of lamas[1] usually being yellow and of laymen red or purple, though other colours are sometimes [177] used. Within the last generation women have completely given up this indigenous type of dress in favour of the Tibetan costume, which consists of a coloured long-sleeved under-bodice, and a dark [302] sleeveless overdress, reaching half-way down the calves and fastened with buttons. Women often tie up their hair with a head-cloth, generally resembling a dirty table napkin. Quite a number

[196] [1] Lama is not a Lepcha word. The Lepchas call lamas either *yook-mun*—this means honoured Mun, that is 'honoured priest of the Lepcha Mun religion'—or more generally *cho-bu* which means 'book man' since the essential part of the lamaist education is reading, a talent not enjoyed by the layman. I have thought it better however to use the word 'lama' as it is already familiar to western readers in its meaning of priest of the Tibetan lamaist religion.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

593 184 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing [302 606] the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273 cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862] hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink 262 on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302] intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273] usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-tosk* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

[facing p. 476]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were completely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and
834 would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait,
576 which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of
793 respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
tease the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

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22. Lepcha hunter

Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

[End Plate 8]

[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
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35. Lepcha young woman

36. Lepcha young man

[End Plate 14]

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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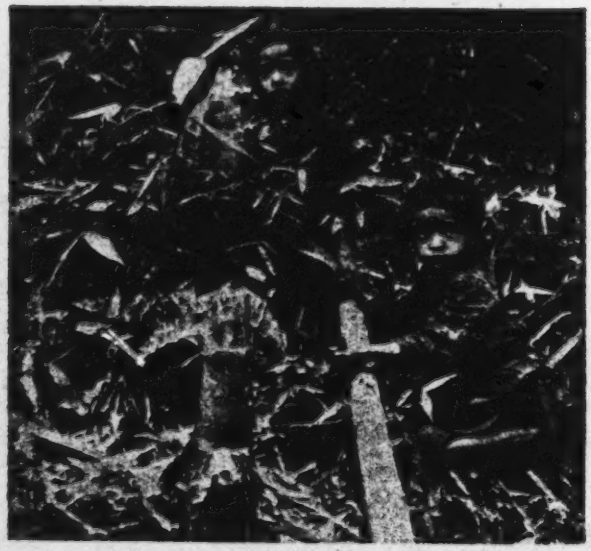

38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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43. Lepcha girl carrying a baby

[302]

44. Lepcha girl

[End Plate 18]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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45. Lepcha man

46. Lepcha man

[End Plate 19]
[End Notes 20-38 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent [136 137] up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with rice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *chi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to the inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new house would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if the old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* would accompany them, spending most of his time with them, but occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last point is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens that Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently unlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and if it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, the survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem had had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabitants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were actually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors preferred to live with relations rather than cope with the work alone.

V

In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; it is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables and roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are only grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of the field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring wheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This garden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal manure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals shelter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. At the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, cultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable material. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit trees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and occasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their flowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the surrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land near their house. All possess some strips of land—often more than a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes of the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of wet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their [439] gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphro- [178] disiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching [223 small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the 857] commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two cate-
● 311 gories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha
556 household depended on the energy of its members and on the proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken" or
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is good.
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the 356 335 house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

352 There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. 354 The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the 415 cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and 323 I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was 261 told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked 353 against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for [21] pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

[312] Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in 251 copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. 415 These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

[313] 342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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412
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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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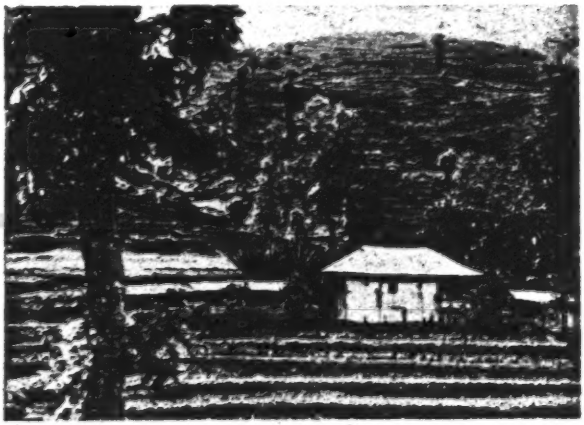

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced
439 and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used
[386 to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali
314] call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingʒong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingʒong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyou-faat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingʒong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingʒong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingʒong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781 888 857] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 533 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

For catching jungle fowl, hares and other small game, a spring bow (*ver sak*) is set in the following way. A short piece of wood, with a broad notch in its upper part, is stuck firmly into the ground and then another piece of wood, which has a notch loosely fitting into that of the first piece, is placed into it in a horizontal position. A bamboo shoot or a small tree is bent, a string attached to it and, lastly, a sling is made, which is led over the upper, horizontal arm of the previously described device. The bait is placed on the sling and by pulling at it, the horizontal arm slips out of the vertical piece and thus releases the trap. — The same kind of trap, only in a larger size, is used for catching deer. 223 224

Another kind of sling trap used for catching jungle fowl is the so-called *ma ló*. It consists of a row of slings, made of the hair of a horse-tail, which are suspended from a fixed horizontal beam. 223

A Lepcha dead-fall (*kóp*) for killing jungle fowl, is constructed as follows: A string is fastened to a tree and then led over a flat stone; the string ends in a short bamboo stick, to which a bait is fastened. Then another short string is bent into a loop and its two ends are firmly fastened to the ground at the bottom of the stone and the bamboo stick with the bait is then pulled through the loop, formed by the lower string, the tension of both strings holding the stone in a tilted position. A slight movement of the bamboo piece causes the upper sling to slip out of the loop and the stone thus drops on top of the animal.

Another kind of dead-fall, which has to be set on a jungle path, is the so-called *shil*. It consists of a heavy wooden beam, supported on one side by a lightly placed stick, which might be easily knocked down by an animal running along the path.

For catching birds, a small grill is made out of a few bamboo sticks, and is afterwards smeared with tarry birdlime (*a' yók*), obtained from a *Ficus* tree. The birdlime is usually kept ready for use in a small bamboo container (*po tek*). The grill, already smeared with bird lime, is known as *a' yók pün grim*; it is placed over [314 ● 324]

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, 137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
874 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

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114 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the
●323 assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other
[437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas.
[415] These vessels called Tang ling fyü tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave
764 goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black-smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[411
622]

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such
356 things up. None of the things had been removed from the
335 house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a
new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

352 There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown.
354 The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the
415 cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and
323 I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was
261 told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked
353 against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for
[721] pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

[312] Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in
251 copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts.
415 These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301
177]

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[335
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p.211]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.

[341] 142 292 793

[facing p. 200]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 346 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in [177] close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the 341 influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars [417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which 231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a [787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he 342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of 779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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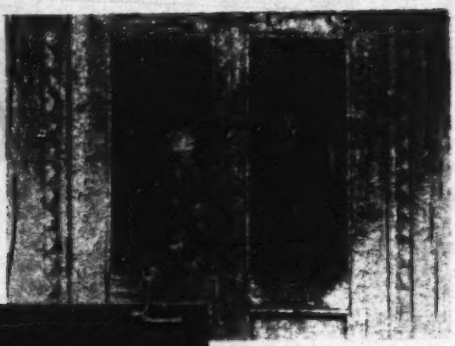
[531
344]

Happy family.



[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Above: A LEPCHA HOUSE

Below: A *MOONG LI:* A HOUSE FOR THE 'HOUSE-GOBLIN' *THYAK-DUM*, SITUATED IN A CARDAMUM FIELD; BEHIND ANOTHER HOUSE

[facing p. 60]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] 794 tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were [868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

iii

621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

● 342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

itself is made of wood, plaster, bamboo and thatch. All buildings have their entrance to the east and face north; the north-south sides are the longest. The first portions of the building to be erected are the five upright supports, one in the centre and one at each corner; they consist of roughly shaped tree-trunks. For the erection of these supports and for the building of the stone wall an overseer is necessary; for the rest of the building no director is used. The floor is usually woven bamboo, but some of the richer people cover the bamboo with smoothed planks; the walls are always of bamboo covered with plaster, occasionally with wooden supports. Except in the Mandal's house, where there are a couple of window frames, the south and west walls are blind; the entrance, which is reached by a pair of notched logs or rough steps, is always on the east; and round the east and north side runs a balcony of plaited bamboo. The north wall is mostly open to the balcony but there are usually wooden shutters which can be closed when the nights are cold. The balcony is used a great deal; for gossiping in the daytime or during warm evenings, for a great variety of household tasks, since there is seldom much light inside the house, as a place where fowls can roost, and as a latrine for infants, invalids, the drunk or the lazy. The roof is made of reeds hung over bamboo and supported on a wooden frame; the north and south sides of the roof cover the whole space between the roof-tree and the top of the wall, but the east and west sides are somewhat inserted at a slightly lower angle, so that there is a triangle (either empty or filled with widely-woven bamboo) on the east and west sides under the roof-tree which is meant to provide ventilation and an escape for the smoke; the device is not very successful and often of an evening I was half-blinded by smoke so that I could not see across a room and the tears streamed down my face. The Lepchas are completely inured to this atmosphere and could not understand why I coughed and choked.

The great majority of Lepcha houses consist of two rooms and an attic; a few of the poorest have only one room, and a couple of the biggest houses have a third small store-room beyond the *dé-ong*. The first room on entering from the east is the *thop-song*, or, as I shall refer to it in future, the kitchen. Round the side are either slightly raised shelves or a bar set into the wooden floor, which marks the sleeping places of the members of the household. During the day the bedding and pillows are rolled up and put away in boxes and are only brought out just before retiring to sleep. Except

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[352] 342 for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the [354] daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353 554] there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels [556] are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

● 342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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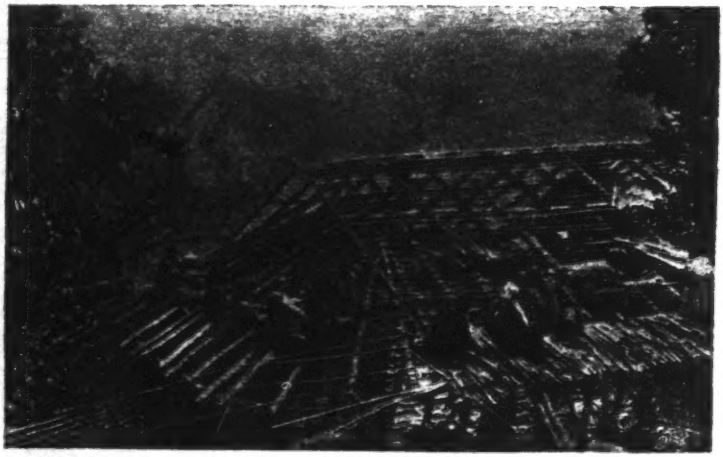

EVERYBODY HELPS WITH THE THATCHING OF PEMBU'S ROOF

[facing p. 68]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 592 Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable know-
[824] ledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[551] [7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Panung-mu (woman from Panung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

173 century; about a generation later the Lepchas started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in land must have developed somewhat later; according to native tradition the land below the monastery—that is to say the more protected valley ground—has been divided into private property from time immemorial, but the higher ground was common property and was acquired and cleared as was wanted. At the time of Kahlyeu's father—that is to say about 1840—this ground too was divided up, and today all cultivatable ground is privately owned. Kahlyeu also said that until about 120 years ago only millet was cultivated, and not dry rice; but this seems to me improbable in view of the fact that the religious observances[8] are much more concerned with dry rice, than with millet or any other crop.

342 When new houses are made they are always built in the late autumn months, after the gathering of the harvest. This date is 777 dictated by two reasons; at no other period would people have sufficient leisure and other dates would be ill-omened. The intending builder gathers materials for some months beforehand. The site of a new house is decided by a number of metaphysical considerations.

[179] First of all there is a lamaist book called Sachet Zai Putta which contains general rules of a very minute nature, indicating what sites are lucky, and what unlucky. This book is said to have been composed by four Gods who gathered together at Gyakar (perhaps Benares) to compile rules so that people should know which sites are good and which bad, which fruitful and which barren, where children can be born, and where they cannot. The following is a small selection of these very detailed regulations:

'A good site is, if there is a mountain to the south and below a slope. It is good if there is a stream on either side of the slope and trees in front. It is good if there is an outcrop of rock to the east and a flat plain to the west and a water fall opposite. Roads from east and north are good, but those from south and west should be avoided as they are used by Deut *moong* (fever devil). If there is a tree to the north directly below the house it should never be cut down; if, however, there is one to the south directly above it, it should be cut, or; if it be too big to cut down, a knife or some other piece of iron should be stuck into it. If the earth on which the

[8] See Chapter Nine. It is probable that millet was historically the earlier crop: what I question is the date of the introduction of dry rice.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

house is built is soft the house-mother will die. It is bad if there is not a hill between the north and the east because you will get the wind. 342 777

'*Choten* and *Mani* ('Mani walls' and prayer flags) should never be placed to the east or the inhabitants of the house will die, they should be on the north and west. It is good if the hill behind be covered with trees. It is bad to have a red cliff behind to the south; people born in the year of the Horse or the year of the Snake will be particularly troubled. (This can be averted by elaborate ceremonies.)

'It is bad if there is standing water below the house which will reflect the light; if there is, gold, silver and copper should be put in the water. It is bad if water seeps through the ground below the house, above it does not matter. It is bad if there is a cave to the north or west; for that would be the home of Mamoo *moong* (a malevolent female devil). It is bad to be below a pass between two hills, with a land slip below you, this is a devil's road. It is bad if there is a juniper tree (*sanden koong*) to the west, . . . etc.'

When an intending builder has chosen a site which fulfils these general desiderata, he has still to find out whether that site will be propitious for him personally. To do this he digs up a small piece of earth from the intended site, concentrating fixedly all the time on the question of whether the ground is good-omened or not, [787] and takes it to a competent lama[9] who will then consult the book *Tong-yoop* and cast a horoscope to see if the site is suitable in relation to the intending builder's horoscope, reckoned by the various year-cycles.[10] If the first site chosen is not propitious others must be looked for until a suitable one is found. It consequently follows that all other considerations are secondary; it is better to be near a stream (for water for domestic use and also in case of fire) and to have suitable ground near for a field-garden, and, if possible, to be near friends and relations; but the verdict of the lamas comes first.

When the site is finally determined upon the lama carefully 342 replaces the sample of earth, and then offers *cherkem*—that is mixed grains floating in strained *chi*—which is thrown on to the ground

[9] In Lingthem only Tafoor and the two Dorjé Lapoon knew how to cast this horoscope; the Lharibu Chujen of Panung was the only lama in the [787] neighbourhood to possess or be able to read Sachet Zai Putta.

[10] See Chapter Seven, pp. 209–212) and Appendix III.

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342 so as to gratify the devils which have taken up their abode in the neighbourhood so that they shall not trouble the work in progress. Then the four corner-posts and the centre post are set up, and the low stone walls, on which the house will rest, are built. The building should always start from the east. After the pillars and stone walls have been set up straight by an overseer the building proceeds without direction, the walls, flooring, ceiling, rafters and finally the thatch being built. When people know that [476] a house is being built or repaired they come to help spontaneously; they are given no pay or wages of any sort except a meal at the end of the day; but they know that they in their turn will receive help when they need it. Men, women and children all lend a hand at the various tasks; but women are considered incapable of handling the biggest pieces of timber.

Some time after its completion the house must be consecrated by lamas and Mun with the ceremony of *Tashi chéné*; ideally this should be performed as soon as the house is completed and repeated twice in subsequent years; but it is often not done immediately for the owner may not possess the ox and other necessary materials. When the first meal is eaten in the completed house some old and experienced man (not the house-owner himself, but it does not matter who else) must make a small hole in the roof immediately above the fireplace and throw out a live ember and some water; this is done so that the smoke may go out properly and not fill the house.

The ceremony of *Tashi chéné* is as follows. First of all incense leaves are burned to pacify the demons who live in the earth below the house and who may have inhabited the trees of which the house is [782] built. Then a live ox is dedicated by a Mun to all the gods, slaughtered and cut up; the head, right foreleg and left hind-leg [465] (these portions are called *ga-zook*) are given to the carpenters who have worked on the house as their fee. After this a lamaist ceremony, with music and readings from the appropriate books, is performed, at the end of which the chief lama present (if possible one of the Dorjé Lapoon)[11] will anoint the house-pillars with blood, *chi*, liquor and butter, starting with the western pillar and proceeding to

[11] Dorjé Lapoon is the title given to the oldest, wisest, and most revered lamas; it is not strictly translatable: dorjé is the sacred 'thunderbolt' which is part of the lama's sacred paraphernalia; lapoon means teacher. In works dealing with Tibet the title is usually translated as 'abbot', but this term seems to me inappropriate for non-resident dignitaries.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu.* Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu.* This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house. 342 [751]

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs. 356

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours. 356 673

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses. 356

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

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776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 346 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in [177] 341 close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars [417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which 231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a [787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he 342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of 779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342 care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361 sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777 all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778] to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken" or
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is good.
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
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and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

[313] 342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Typical Lepcha homestead.

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Sowing dry rice.

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Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House-building and
general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342
Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356
April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249
third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177]
from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841
plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784
who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249
offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244]
for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244]
finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249
may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec. --Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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142

Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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415
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285
417
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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5
Bhutan AK2

L
342

13. A LEPCHA HOUSE OF SIKKIM

B
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14. A BHUTANESE HOUSE OF SIKKIM

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

342

29. Lepcha house

30. Lepcha house

[End Plate 11]

XII

342
417

31. Lepcha house with stores

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32. Fenced Lepcha settlement

[End Plate 12]

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet

Lepcha AKS

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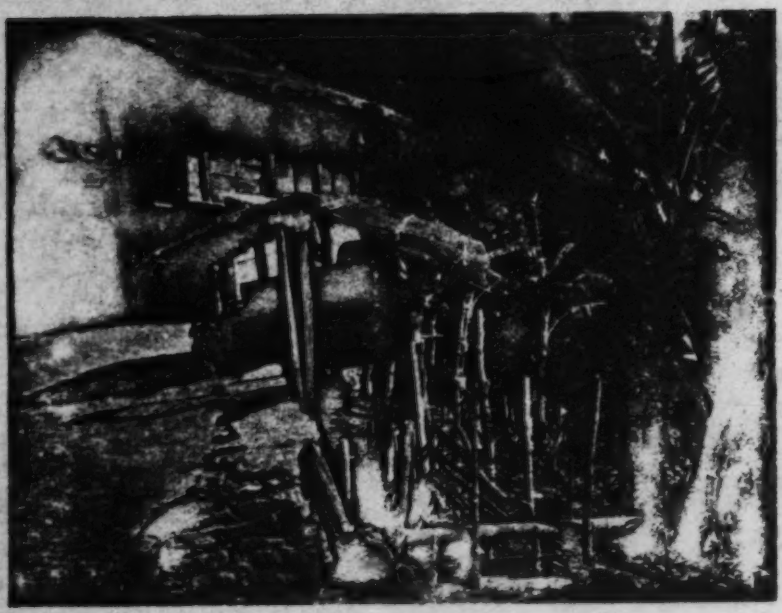

Lepcha house in a forest in Sikkim

291

Facing P.6

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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AK5 Lepcha AK5

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the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an even in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

X

343
243

27. Lepcha farmer winnowing rice

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28. Lepcha shepherd with rain-cap

[End Plate 10]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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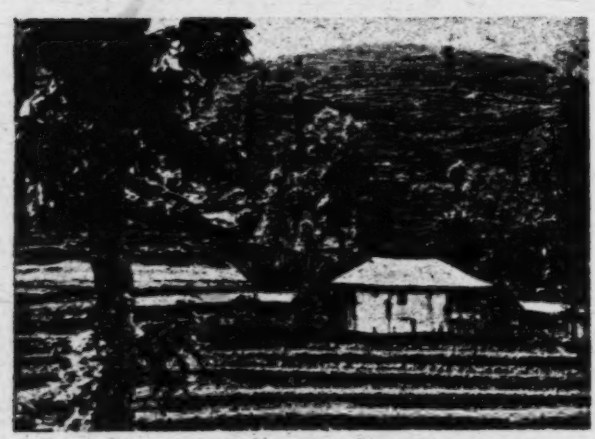
412
313

39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

241
133
343
137



40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *choten*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu. 487

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation. 346 [784]

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment. [249]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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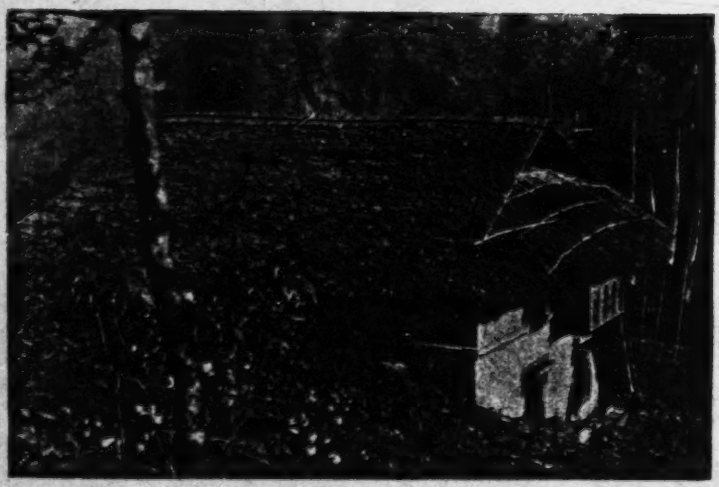

Above: LINGTHEM MONASTERY FROM BELOW
Below: LINGTHEM MONASTERY FROM ABOVE
Note the prayer flags.

[facing p. 52]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar ') 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [787]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346 ●
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [386] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch 778 is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[188] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

wall on their right side (as must be done for all lamaist holy places or objects) turning the prayer wheels as they come up to them. 346 778

The chief holy place is a large bare room, occupying almost the whole of the ground floor of the building. The interior of the room is empty except for four supporting pillars in the middle of the floor, and two slightly raised seats running in parallel lines from the altar to the door on which the lamas sit during ceremonies. In the centre of the back wall is the altar, inset in a carved wooden frame; on it are three large images, Sangyi Youbami in the centre, flanked by Gamyang Kanché Rimbuché and Chérézi; in front of these larger images are four smaller gods. On either side of the altar are worked wooden pigeon-holes, in which are kept the hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyour, one of the two Tibetan scriptures. These volumes consist of loose leaves bound up in a cloth and fastened between two plain pieces of wood as bindings. Scattered about the room are the various musical instruments which are not in use—drums, gongs and cymbals; the metal instruments similar to trumpets and clarionets, the conch shells and the flutes made out of a human femur are kept either on or before the altar. Every morning at dawn a *kané* (sacristan) places on the altar before the images seven bowls of water for the gods to drink and wash in; every evening at sunset these bowls are emptied and replaced by *chimi*—altar lights, consisting of a small metal container with a wick of bamboo or cloth, filled with melted butter or oil. There also stands on the altar a copper jug containing blessed water (*tyü*) and usually a pair of vases filled with flowers. There are also occasional offerings of cones of ground grain. During important festivals the front of the altar is completely hidden by elaborate constructions, chiefly made out of dough and butter which represent those gods who are being specially worshipped. Anybody approaching this or any other lamaist altar for the first time is meant to prostrate himself three times, standing with joined hands, falling to the knees and then touching the ground with the forehead. After these prostrations no special attention is paid to the altar, and it is quite permissible to turn one's back on it. [779] [534]

To the west of the main room, with a separate entrance also on the north wall, is the *lha-gong*. This is a high and narrow chamber almost entirely filled with four huge prayer wheels, reaching up to the ceiling; indeed the first and biggest of the wheels, which is called Betsa Guru, pierces the ceiling and its top, a cone

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of
778 the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused
[783 cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark
785] chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A
[779] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber
289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Above: A LEPCHA HOUSE

Below: A *MOONG LI:* A HOUSE FOR THE 'HOUSE-GOBLIN' *THYAK-DUM*, SITUATED IN A CARDAMUM FIELD; BEHIND ANOTHER HOUSE

[Facing p. 60]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

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Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

356 much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

776 Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* [787] lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go [782] away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

346 In some houses however it is divined that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and 346 is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's 782 house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ntestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with ice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *hi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to he inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new ouse would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if he old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* vould accompany them, spending most of his time with them, ut occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last oint is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens hat Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently nlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and f it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, he survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem ad had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabiants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were ctually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors referred to live with relations rather than cope with the work lone.

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In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables nd roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are nly grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of he field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring vheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This arden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal nanure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals helter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. t the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, ultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable naterial. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit rees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and ccasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their lowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the urrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land ear their house. All possess some strips of land—often more han a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes f the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of vet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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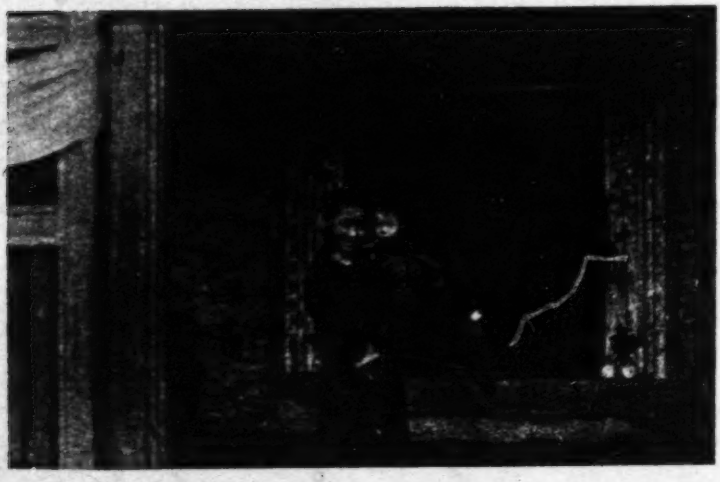

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

[facing p. 296]

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Lingtem Monastery.

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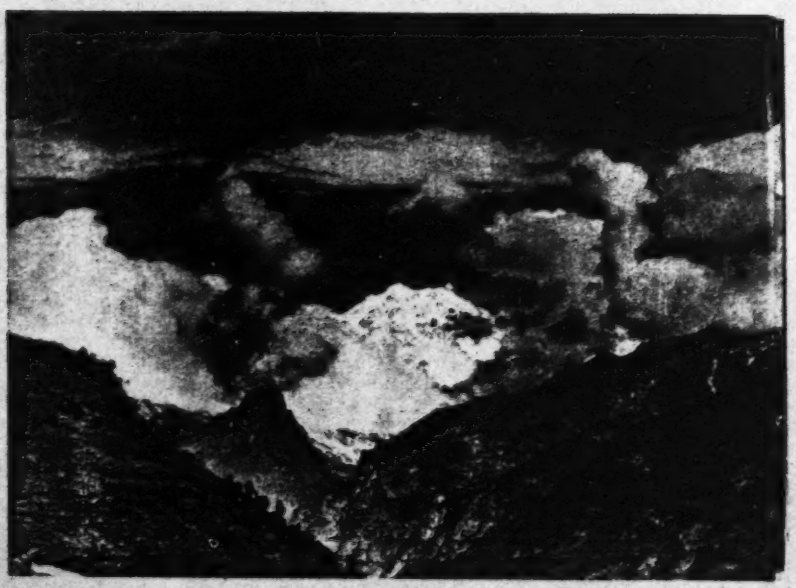

Storm clouds over Kinchinjunga.

[facing p. 17]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000
unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114
the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793
Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346
two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822]
it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778]
altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373
away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782]
either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather
startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange
projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at
every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for
it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number.
It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I
had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the
English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical
with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several
fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen,
which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of
ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks'
feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon
designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams
above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded
me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pan-
tomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de
Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was
put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep,
was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly
gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning
we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-
bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its
solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to
exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

"There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 8

Houses and House-building

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 346 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in [177] 341 close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

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Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

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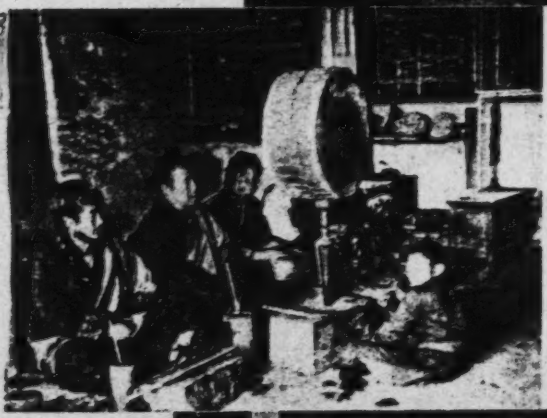

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 274]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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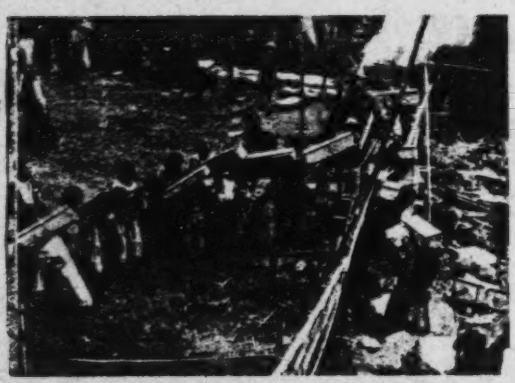

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The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

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Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] 794 tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were [868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

iii

621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322] especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, [137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

35 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with [289] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either [361] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and [161] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the 527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342
351
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Typical Lepcha homestead.

241
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Sowing dry rice.

342
356
417
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Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [713]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence [514 361] much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's 241 main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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351
482
142
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Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Askyuk*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

[FACING p. 226]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142

Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

342
571
415
351
291
285
417
481

Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

itself is made of wood, plaster, bamboo and thatch. All buildings 342
have their entrance to the east and face north; the north-south sides are the longest. The first portions of the building to be erected are the five upright supports, one in the centre and one at each corner; they consist of roughly shaped tree-trunks. For the erection of these supports and for the building of the stone wall an overseer is necessary; for the rest of the building no director is used. The floor is usually woven bamboo, but some of the richer people cover the bamboo with smoothed planks; the walls are always of bamboo covered with plaster, occasionally with wooden supports. Except in the Mandal's house, where there are a [554]
couple of window frames, the south and west walls are blind; the entrance, which is reached by a pair of notched logs or rough steps, is always on the east; and round the east and north side runs a balcony of plaited bamboo. The north wall is mostly open to the balcony but there are usually wooden shutters which can be closed when the nights are cold. The balcony is used a great deal; for gossiping in the daytime or during warm evenings, for a great variety of household tasks, since there is seldom much light inside the house, as a place where fowls can roost, and as a latrine for infants, invalids, the drunk or the lazy. The roof is made of reeds hung over bamboo and supported on a wooden frame; the north and south sides of the roof cover the whole space between the roof-tree and the top of the wall, but the east and west sides are somewhat inserted at a slightly lower angle, so that there is a triangle (either empty or filled with widely-woven bamboo) on the east and west sides under the roof-tree which is meant to provide ventilation and an escape for the smoke; the device is not very successful and often of an evening I was half-blinded by smoke so that I could not see across a room and the tears streamed down my face. The Lepchas are completely inured to this atmosphere and could not understand why I coughed and choked.

The great majority of Lepcha houses consist of two rooms and an attic; a few of the poorest have only one room, and a couple of the biggest houses have a third small store-room beyond the *dé-ong*. The first room on entering from the east is the *thop-song*, or, as I 352
shall refer to it in future, the kitchen. Round the side are either
slightly raised shelves or a bar set into the wooden floor, which 342
marks the sleeping places of the members of the household. During the day the bedding and pillows are rolled up and put away in boxes and are only brought out just before retiring to sleep. Except

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[352] 342 for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; [354] this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353] there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously 554 with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796
291
[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

533
415
352

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
346]

At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 274]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

● 353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[352] 342 for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; [354] this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353] there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously 554 with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 171] houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
● 354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dormitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Sometimes the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu*. Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu*. This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house. 342 [751]

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs. 356

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours. 356 673

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses. 356

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

In some houses however it is divined that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

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and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such 342 ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up [164] every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. L 356 It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we 476 arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. L No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being [465] fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once L [356] started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which 521 seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone 831 appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); [273] but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief 522 topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of [313] course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

776 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342
351
133

Typical Lepcha homestead.

241
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Sowing dry rice.

342
356
417
291

Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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House-building and
general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342
Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356
April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249
third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841
plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784
who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249
offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244]
for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244]
finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249
may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec. -- Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273] all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824 the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 356] burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562] girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852 is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574 guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852 ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431 present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852 an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [771] book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781] at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358] Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not made the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

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133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a [136 decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes 137] first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number

291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there.
[751] Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

● 361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

361 184 villages on the Zongu bank. Excluding the Talung monastery, which is a couple of days' journey from most of the villages, and which, save for a guardian, is empty except during certain festivals, there are no lamaist monasteries and very few lamas on this bank. [829] The inhabitants of this portion are considered by the people of Zongu to be uncivilised and rude, keeping much more to the habits of their forefathers. For a great deal of their food they rely on hunting and forest produce; their religion is still almost entirely that of the Mun, the lamaist propaganda having reached them very slightly. Owing to the excessively precipitous nature of the ground I never went over to this side of the river; on a few occasions however I saw some of the inhabitants.

361 621 There are in Zongu itself twenty-two settlements with distinctive names, and across the river eight more; some of these named settlements only consist of two or three houses and they are administratively and emotionally divided into twelve districts. Although it is convenient to speak of villages these settlements have no sort of geographical unity; the houses are either isolated in the fields and forests, or gathered in small groups of three or four; I never saw more than four houses which were close neighbours. Except for the three villages—Lingthem, Gyatong and Tangvoong—which possess a monastery, there is no sort of focal centre to the village, and it would be possible for a casual traveller to pass through quite a large village without being aware of its existence. Lingthem, where I lived, consisted of 33 houses; it is the biggest village on the Talung side of Zongu, and the second biggest in the reserve; the biggest of all is Gyatong, which, with its neighbour Hi, contains 60 houses. From the spur of one hill in Lingthem it is possible to see eight houses at once; I should reckon that there were quite three miles and three thousand feet between the lowest house to the east and the highest house to the west in the village.

621 When three or four houses are grouped together they are usually given a distinctive name. This grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours; people living in adjoining houses may be closely related, or they may be complete strangers, and full brothers may live separated by the full distance of the village.[2] The metaphysical desiderata, described later in this chapter, for the choice of a house site and

[2] For the plan of the houses of Lingthem and their inhabitants, see Appendix I, b.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with
[28] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either
[36] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and
[61] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the
527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of
796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342 care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361 sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777 all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778] to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken" or
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is good.
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[end map (A)]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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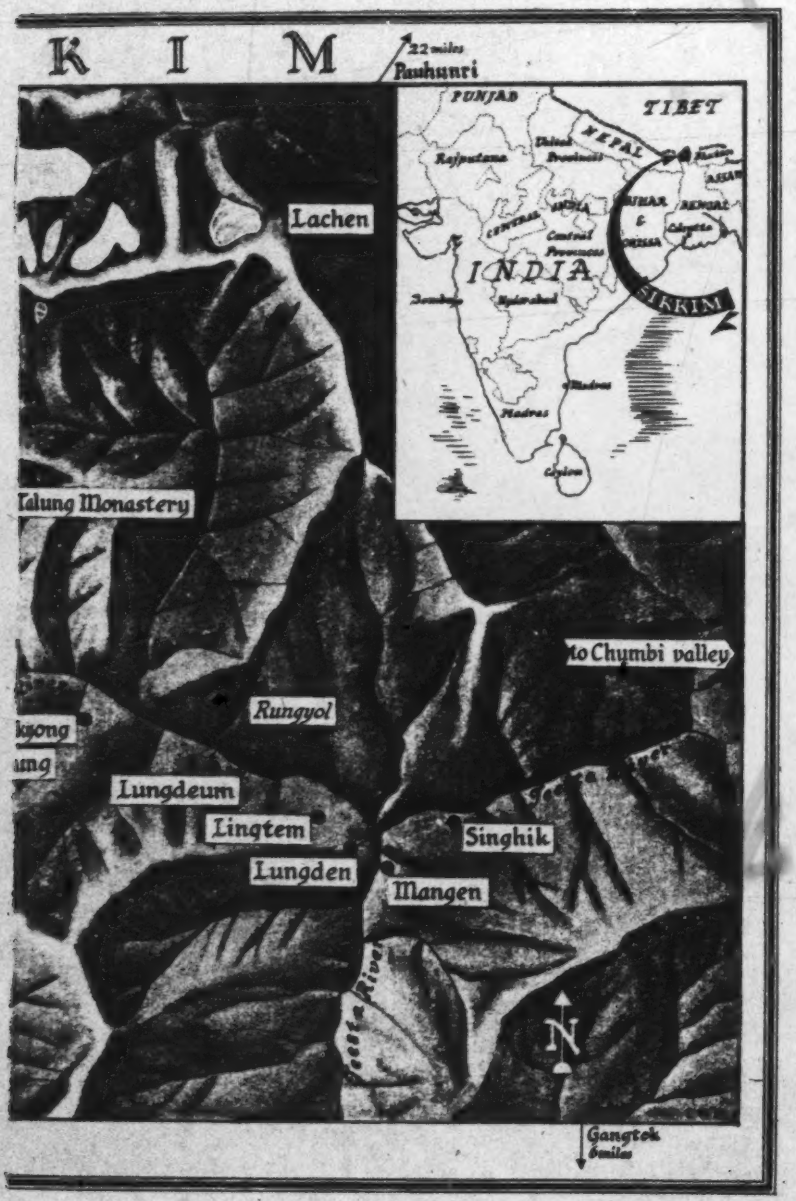

[end map (B)]

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Archiv für Völkerkunde

Volume VIII (1953)

/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, ●361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made 415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dormitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Sometimes the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

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31. Lepcha house with stores

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32. Fenced Lepcha settlement

[End Plate 12]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence [514 364] much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's 241 main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for doubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000 unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114 the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793 Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346 two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822] it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778] altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373 away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782] either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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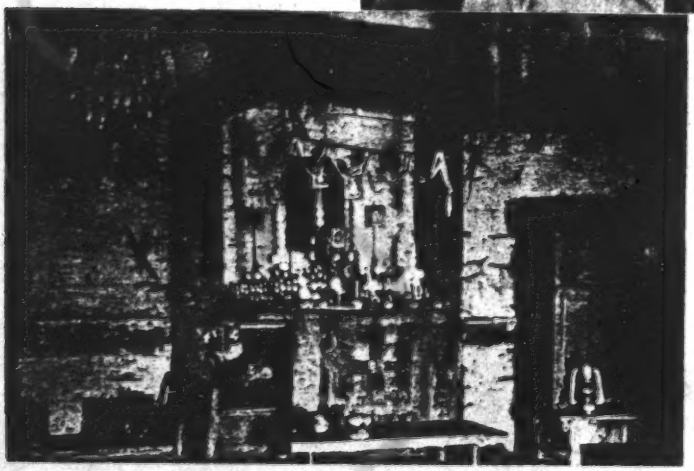

[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been 796 801 previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green [373] tea-leaves and ghee. Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 177 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 787 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 373 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [386] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch 778 is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[788] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced
439 and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used
[386 to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali
314] call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingzong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingzong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyoufaat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingzong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingzong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingzong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used 384 for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[384] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 539 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath. After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 869 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 824 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu, both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but [439 177] metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowadays replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the 824
bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and 411
fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife 412
about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black- 326
smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported 439

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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A Lepcha bridge.

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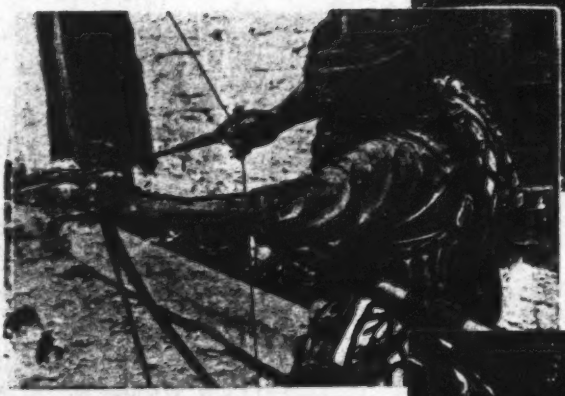

Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*să lí*). It is
411 always made of bamboo, with a string (*să lí grím*) made either of
[283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kŭ ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kă fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pŭn hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pă kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

the poison is prepared only shortly before the hunt begins. The root is ground between two stones and then some water is added to form a thick paste. Lepcha hunters are very careful in handling aconite and should their hands show even a small cut caused during house or field work, they will refrain from using the poison on this day. Should an animal be killed by a poisoned missile, the hunter will wait until the body of the prey has grown cold — »the poison returns then from the heart to the wound« — and afterwards that part of the body, which had been wounded is cut off and thrown away.

Hunting weapons

Four different kinds of bow are used by the Lepchas:

1. The hunting bow in the average 140 cms long. This type of bow was also used in warfare.
2. A bow, in the average 180 cms long, used in marksmanship. The central part of the bow's shaft (*pyăng shing*) is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo, cut in a typical Lepcha design and fastened to the rod of the bow by resin and strings. The arrows, used for this bow, have a simple, conical iron point without barbs.
3. *Da bryó să lí*, pellet bow, in the average 150 cms long, used for killing birds. The centre of the bow's rod is usually strengthened by a piece of bamboo. Four small, flat slivers of bamboo are bound together in the middle of the bow-string to form a small square, upon which a clay-ball (*da bryó*) can be placed. This central piece of the bow-string is called *să lí bryeng*. The bow-string is fastened to the shaft of the bow in such a way, that it remains slightly turned to the right, allowing the missile to fly past the bow and the hand which holds it. — The clay-balls, used for the *da bryó să lí* are usually burned to make them harder. The pellet bow can be seen very frequently in use during harvest time, when the fields have to be guarded against birds.

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

411 4. A small cross-bow is employed by the Lepchas in an automatic trap, which will be described later.

The bow is carried over the shoulder or in the hand, while a simple bamboo tube, which can be closed with a lid of the same material, serves as a quiver (*sā lu*).

It is customary among the Lepchas to handle the bow and arrow in the following way: The left hand grasps the rod of the bow in its centre and the upstretched thumb presses the shaft of the arrow gently against the bow. The first finger and the middle finger of the right hand together pull the bow-string, the stump end of the arrow resting between these two fingers. — To prevent injury from the released bow-string, the left armwrist is usually protected by a piece of leather, a woven bamboo bracelet (*tūk bya*) or by a ring, made of a cow's horn.

411 224 Occasionally Lepcha hunters use a spear (*sūng hlyo*); its barbed iron head has in the average a length of 35 cms. The spear is mostly used when hunting bear or wild pig. Some Lepcha hunters even claim, that a poisoned spear can be used successfully for killing a rhino, which is said to have one weak spot in its back where a mortal wound can be inflicted.

224 Stories circulating among the Lepchas narrate that formerly pointed and poisoned wooden logs were used for killing elephants. After finding a passage in the jungle frequented by elephants — mostly near a place where elephants would come to drink — several hunters climbed on some high trees on both sides of the passage, suspending the log with the help of ropes above the trail. When an elephant passed below, the log was released at a favourable moment to wound the animal in the neck. The prey was then simultaneously attacked by other hunters with poisoned spears.

Traps

A great variety of traps are used by the Lepchas and only the most frequent types should be mentioned here.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

157 An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A 142 group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet—rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists.* The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is 181 their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are 182 supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when

[441] * I have seldom been able to insert my own wrist (which is smaller than the average) into the wooden guard which the Lepcha wears on his left, as a protection against the bow-string: it is a curved ring of wood with an opening at one side, through which, by a little stretching, the wrist is inserted.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.

411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411] and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184 between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285] heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293 a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle, which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184] leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on, running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures; they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301 the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439] turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415 Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789 contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301 in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515 dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port, demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail, teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302 two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking partners, who wear only one.

000 magic. Also included in the collection were a few urn fragments
172 discovered after superficial excavations on the plateau of Daramdin in West Sikkim during the investigation of one version of the Lepcha legend of the building of a tower; the findings, a few of which reveal band and serrated /Wolfszahnmuster/ patterns, possibly stem from the time of the Great Tibetan Kingdom (9th century A.D.).

●411 As for hunting and war weapons, the collection has several bows of varying size and type—among them a bow-sling used for hunting birds—, arrows, hunting poisons, bushknives, an old sword, and a
227 round war shield of cane. Among the various fishing implements, a large casting net made of nettles deserves special mention.

212 It was also possible to acquire three of the rare old manuscripts written in the Lepcha script that is derived from the Tibetan alphabet; also copies of a few Lepcha books and of several wedding songs were made.

114 /271/ The Lepcha collection comprising 93 different objects is supplemented by a few objects of Bhutanese origin that are likewise
122 used by the Lepchas (strips of weaving, a war shield of rhinoceros skin, small rice baskets with characteristic bright-colored patterns). The collection is further supplemented by about 300 color and black and white photographs as well as tape recordings of songs of the Lepchas and two of their neighbors, the Gurkhas and Tamang. Thanks to the friendly helpfulness of the leader of the third Danish Central Asia Expedition, His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark—who is likewise to be thanked for making it possible to ship the collections to Europe in an especially favorable way—the accessible ethnographic material concerning the Lepchas was also enriched by color photographs of the costumes and dances of this tribe.

000 Concerning the objects stemming from the Tibetan area, we are dealing above all with ceremonial objects, which serve to supplement the Tibetan Collection already present in the museum: an almost three meter high "thread cross of the Ma mo demonesses" (Ma moi mdos), which is used as a demon trap in weather conjuring, thread amulets, paraphernalia for performing various ceremonies of the Lamas, a valuable old scroll painting (thang ka) depicting the mountain divinity g Nyan chhen thang lha, a scroll painting with pictures of the founder of the Karmapa sect—Dus gsum mkhyen po and his disciples; further, three thang ka with depictions of the oracle divinities that are relatively rarely portrayed on Tibetan scroll

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting
796 god must be performed. The animal is already carved up
224 in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit
[784] over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[64]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

● 411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god
773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are 278
well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a [441]
deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrow head but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, "Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from [439]
Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear [648]
them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the [226]
gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 224 them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These [776] hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-ahi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The [425] Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

411 The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ¾ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ½ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched pin in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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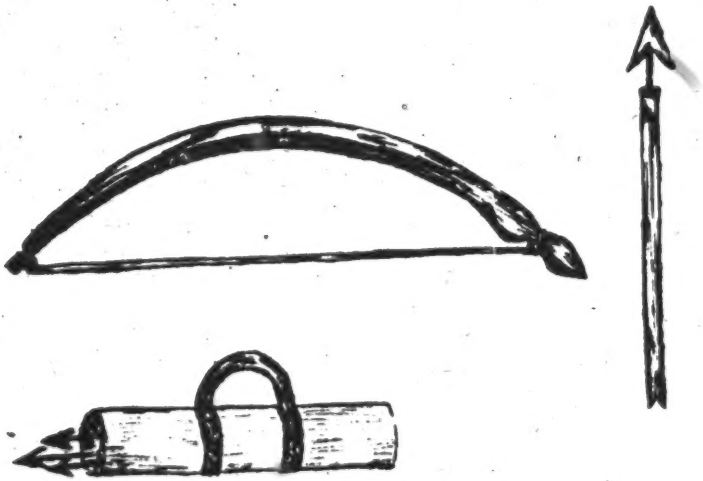
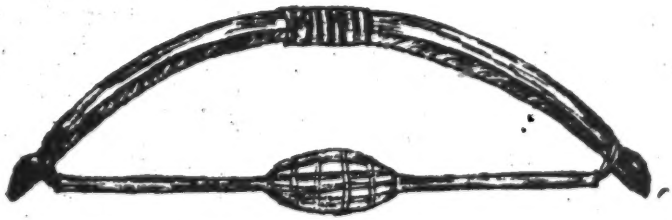


23 Lepcha bow, arrow, quiver



24 Lepcha bow for stone shooting

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

●141 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [123] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

VIII

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19. Lepcha grandmother with grandchildren

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22. Lepcha hunter

Fig. 20-21
see p. 61-62

[End Plate 8]
[End Plates 1-7 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

532 detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

778 All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are 532 made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

● 412 The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge [439] and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them. 412

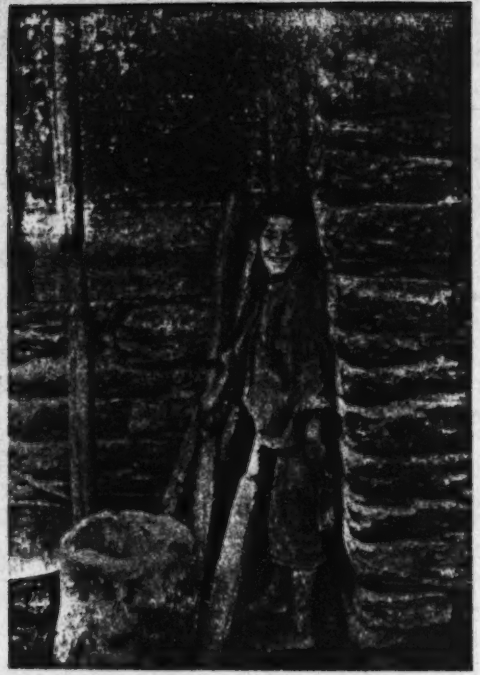
Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing. 824 [312 415] [273] [415] [411] [231 262]

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum. [323] 415

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop. 285

1: Gorer J-5,(1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 9



CHÉLÉ, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY HIS AUNT

PATEK, THE HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD OF SIX AT 17. WITH HIM PONGRING, THE MONASTERY GUARDIAN

[facing p. 160]

[42]

162
291

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

751
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846

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 27

159x
142
291
412

KURMA GYAPÖN

[facing p. 384]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

saying " Why don't you keep your wife in order? She is always 159x
going down shamelessly to your nephew's house." At this the two
uncles quarrelled and the younger one committed suicide by 762
taking poison. But this only started the trouble. The surviving uncle said to Ahyok " This death is your fault and you must pay all the expenses of the funeral ceremonies." Ahyok protested that it was not his fault; his aunt used to come to visit him; how was he responsible? and anyhow he had no money. But the uncle insisted and a meeting was held of the Mandal and *youmi*. To this meeting Ahyok went taking with him a pig, fifteen rupees and a load of *chi*. I stopped at home with my Mother. My brother admitted that he used to sleep with the woman and the meeting decided that he must pay for the funeral expenses and ignored his plea of poverty.

'Then my brother returned home and went up to the loft and took there the poison *took-ra-kyet nyung* which is used in hunting[18] and swallowed it. Then he came down and said " Those people say I must pay for what is not my fault; so I shall die." He came down in front of the house and walked about backwards and forwards. I asked him what was the matter and caught hold of him as he walked backwards and forwards. Then my brother drew his *chimli* (*a pointed knife which is worn in front of the body at the waist*) [412] and cried " Come on! Come on! I will kill all who come near me." Then I caught hold of his right hand and Mother took the other; he made a lunge at my Mother and nearly killed her but I pulled him back in time. I finally managed to wrench the knife from his hand and then with my Mother's help pushed him on to the ground. I forced his mouth open and saw that his tongue was swelling and his hands were clenched; so I knew he had taken poison. I sent our younger brother to get the root of wild raspberry and hens' droppings; the root was pounded and mixed with the droppings and given him as an emetic, but it was too late and he died.'[19]

[18] 'People also wear a tiny quantity wrapped up in a thick cloth attached to their clothing near their heart as a protection against devils.'

[19] The fact of the suicide is independently confirmed by a great number of people though the reasons which caused it are somewhat different. Jiroong thought that he committed suicide because he was reproved for not working in the fields but instead going into the forest to look for wild tubers. Tafoor knew that the suicide was caused by the inability of some man to control his wife after he had been warned and thought Ahyok's suicide directly followed

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [244]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [502]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412] ●
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black-smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

[856] By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

411 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [74] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [125] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.

412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[468] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[452] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 412 The most important of the implements used for farming is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[171] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 174 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

XVI

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39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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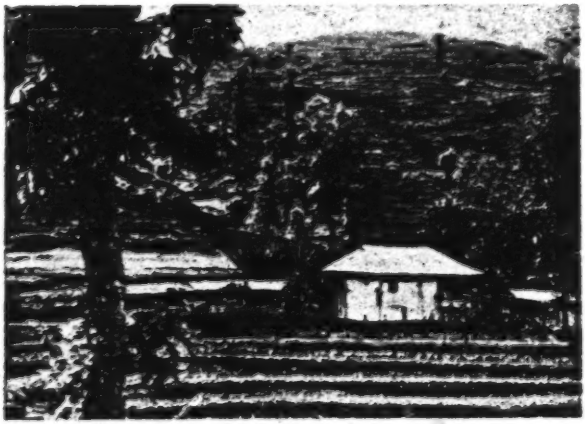

40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them.

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing.

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum.

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [824] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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MONASTERY FEAST

[facing p. 256]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[415]

ONGDEN'S WEDDING

Above : Ongden in a clean dress. Behind him old Adér.

Below : The feast.

[facing p. 336]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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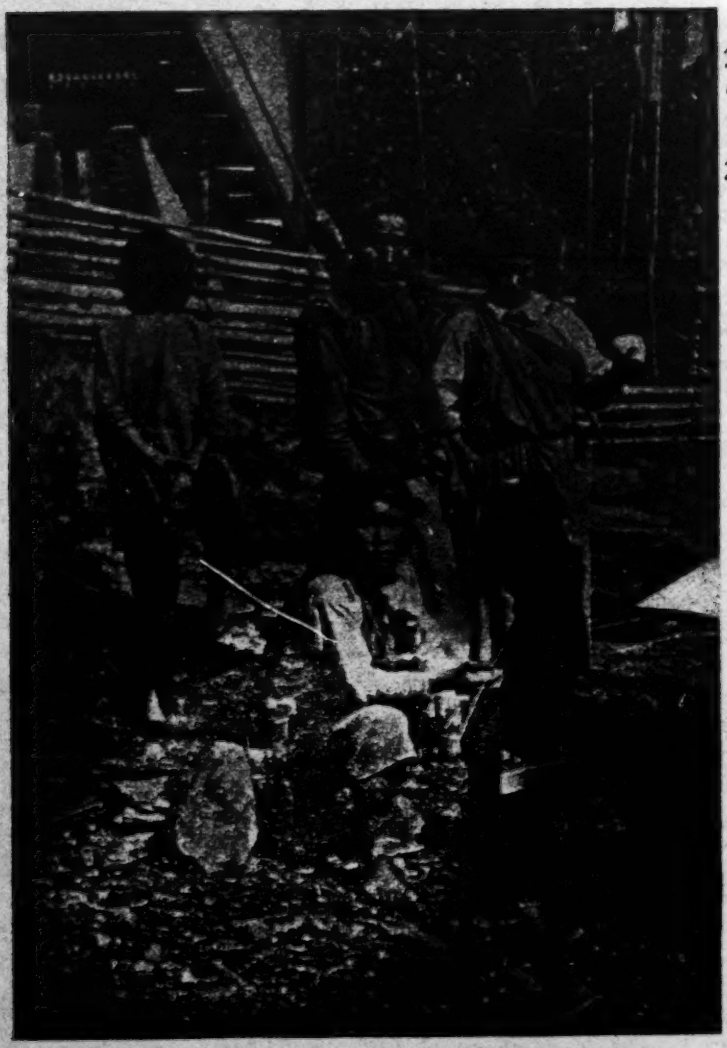

MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

[facing p. 476]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyeu and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand [415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind. [231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number. It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen, which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks' feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep, was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

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[facing p. 22]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[211]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[FACING p. 96]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chötembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

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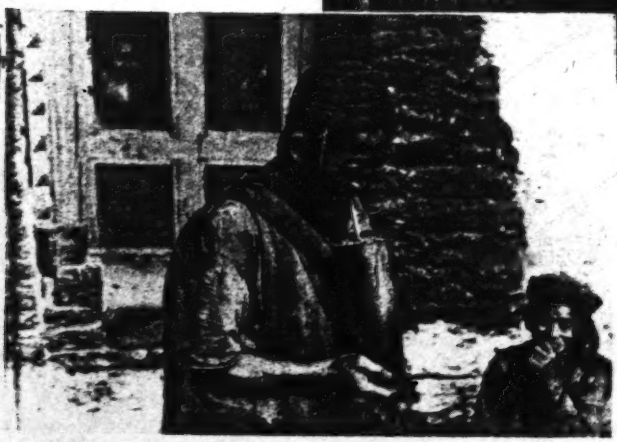

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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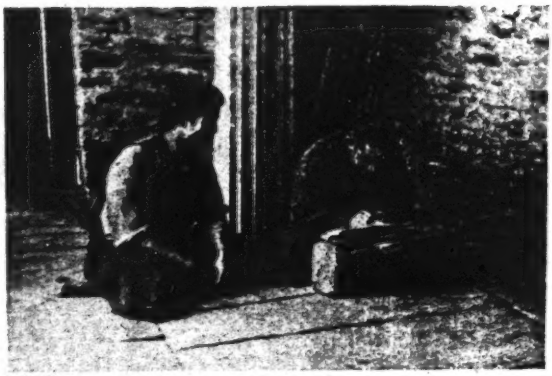
Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."



778
249

A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 387] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required; [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

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[531
341]

Happy family.

[285]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having oversaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Karma.

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Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796
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[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

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415
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Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
346]

At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[FACING p. 274]

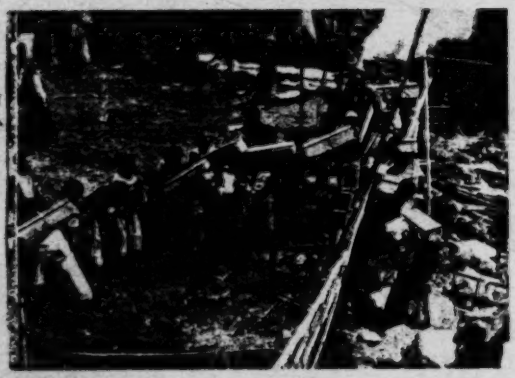
2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796

The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

[346 415 855]

[779 482]



The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella", is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p.290]

114 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the
323 assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other
[437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas.
[415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave
764 goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415 ●
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one,

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.-Analyst]

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Archiv für Völkerkunde

Volume VIII (1953)

/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

114 One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, 361 related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now num- [161] bers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in 177 two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

322 The household implements included in the collection are made ●415 for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet 286 beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does

[539] En Ye!

Mo-tan-chi Ruń kap ńun nen bin	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lā-non po-bong yit duk kań sa	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos And the *ar-tasm* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tasm po-mig duk kań sa pa-s'or boń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kung sa Ruń kap gum yań s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *maruca* millet beer [3]).

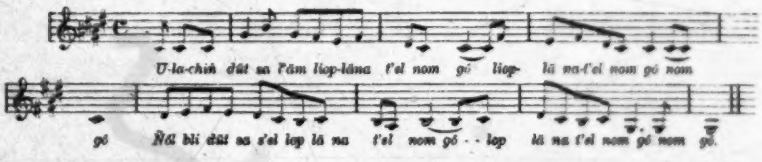
[574] [273]

III.

U-LA-DUÁ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duń dūt sa-l'ām liop-lā na-t'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [2]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñā-bli dūt sa-s'el	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Sań la lyen s'u fań-ruń	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer ki-run nań nāń liop-lā diń mit nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tań-kat sa-s'el	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tań-gum diń-mit nom	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'el ta-bāl-la liop-lā na-t'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'el nań nān	Like a sorrowing *S'uń* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loń la ma run na mo	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ne tak-mk buk go ma t'ān na-gań	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-che-ne* yam [7])
Kyoń-rūa-le lat dok ā-tim-bu lāt non-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyoń-rūa-le* heart.

[824] [231] [415]

[1]) *Pu-shor* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poa*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine crocana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poā-t'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poā-hia*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *hip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñal-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Ken-s'u*.

[7]) *Tak-mk-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

[222]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

755
782
416
291

Fig. 21, The cattle sacrifice

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [236]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

142
231
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857

25. Lepcha children starting for field work

142
291
243
462

26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

291
482
415
412
137
313

37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

142
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302
137

38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

291
482
415
854

41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

854
142
291

42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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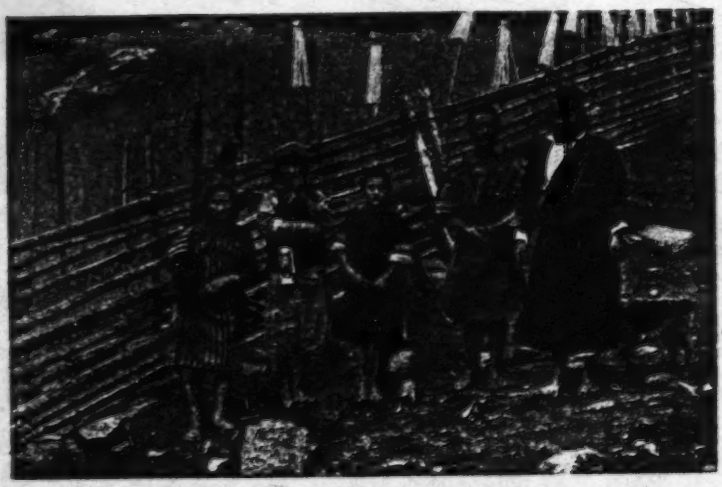
MONASTERY FEAST

[facing p. 256]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857

MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING



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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

F 320

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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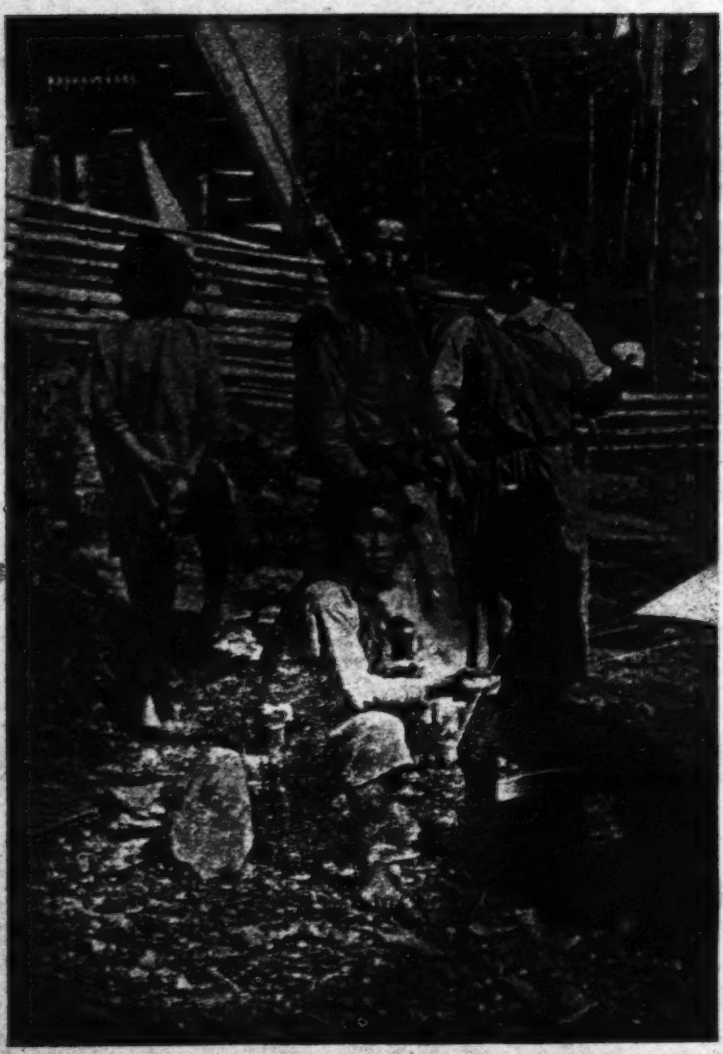

MR. AND MRS. JIROONG. MRS. JIROONG IS SPINNING. SHE IS WEARING TIBETAN DRESS AND HER HUSBAND'S HAT. SEATED IN FRONT IS DADOOL SOAKING A CUT FOOT. ATYOOK TURNS HIS BACK

[facing p. 424]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

[facing p. 476]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Nazir had forgotten or lost the matches entrusted to him, and we could get neither light nor fire. The best part of the time was spent in trying native dodges to obtain a spark, in which D. took an active interest, but the wood was not the right kind, and was, besides, so wet that nothing could be done. Toomhang, the Lepcha, was with us, as he always preferred to be when not actually ordered to keep with and bring up the coolies as he should have done, but we liked gossiping with the fine old man, who was of much too gentle a nature to be a coolie driver. When he told us there would be at least five feet of snow on Tiphu at our last camping ground, by the morning, we knew he was right, and consoled ourselves for all our troubles at the thought of the happy escape we had had."

FLORENCE DONALDSON, 1900.

The roads.

"The *pugdandy* (footpath) now led us up the hill, and the hard climbing we had to do helped to take my thoughts off an experience calculated to unnerve one. In some places we had to scale a projecting rock by means of two pieces of the trunk of a tree with notches at alternate intervals to put one's feet in. This Sikkim style of Jacob's ladder is well enough for the barefooted native, but not at all easy for the leather-shod European. I had looped up my habit skirt before starting, but found it very much in the way all the morning." (But you would probably have found it easier walking in those woollen knickers.)

Ibid.

Sikkim bungalows (old style).

"There were two rooms in the curiously constructed rest-house; the floor and roof being of the same material and as fragile as the walls. We had to take off our boots before we could walk on the yielding floor. Our camp bedsteads would have gone through it, so our bedding was spread on the raised floor which had all the effect of a spring bed,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars [417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which 231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a [787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he 342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of 779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Typical Lepcha homestead.

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Sowing dry rice.

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Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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31. Lepcha house with stores

361
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32. Fenced Lepcha settlement

[End Plate 12]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[421] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
124] their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 [262]

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the 428
younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property 428
permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there
is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get 597
their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple [592]
and one child, the dependent members of the household usually 422
have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

422 The children look after and feed these animals a little, and will cry if they are sold. The parents however are at perfect liberty to sell them, if they wish to, without consulting the owner; the money is said to be set against the expenses incurred for the child's clothes. If on the other hand the parents kill the animals for sacrifice or food, they have to replace them, and any young the animals bear belong to the owner. Also when they are still very young children are given a tiny piece of land as their own field; at first the parents help them with their work, but by about the age of twelve the children are expected to be able to look after them by themselves. As the children grow older the size of their field is increased. The grain from the children's fields is harvested separately and kept in a special container, but the house-mother can use it for household purposes without consulting the child. The produce is stated to be set against the children's clothes and knife, and, in the case of young girls, jewels. In general the privately-
422 owned animals and grain are not set apart from the others in any
583 way; only when girls go to their husband's village they take with them their private animals and the last year's harvested grain as a sort of dowry. When a wife settles into her husband's home she is generally given small portions of rice terrace and cardamum field, from the proceeds of which she can buy jewels. In this manner everybody, even the youngest children, is given the appearance of being self-supporting, of feeding and clothing themselves by their own work.

422 It seems as though nearly everybody except the very poorest have a few private animals. Mrs. Datoop, one of the richer women in Lingthem, says that at her marriage she brought with her six or seven cattle and other animals. She now owns ten head of cattle, three rice terraces, and two cardamum fields which yield about sixteen maunds; she bought her very fine jewels with the proceeds. When her two daughters were married each took with her a pair of each sort of animal, a big copper pot, and jewels which had been bought from the proceeds of their grain and animals. Her daughter-in-law Mrs. Pembu, brought with her when she was married oxen, goats, chickens and crops; but most of these have been used for the household, and now she only claims as her own two pigs and three chickens. Her jewels are all presents from relatives. Since she and her husband are the sole owners of their property she has no private land.

Chimpet, Tafoor's oldest son, aged fourteen, owns a pig given

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

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vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapôn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

● 423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
597 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

141 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [124] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 60 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
577 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FOUR

MONEY LENDERS AND TRADING FRIENDS

i

426 439 At Mangan, on the main mule road between Tibet and Gangtok, above the only solid bridge which connects Zongu with the mainland, are a group of half-a-dozen mixed stores. These stores are owned by Indians, members of the Mahawari caste, a caste of hereditary money lenders and misers. They have been settled in the neighbourhood about thirty years; before Mangan was developed they lived at Singthem. Ostensibly they are only shopkeepers; in point of fact their chief profit is made by advancing cash and goods to the neighbouring peasants against their produce. Formerly they used to deal with every sort of crop, but since the introduction of cardamum they have concentrated exclusively on that. The State has given these traders, or, as they are locally called, kanya, the monopoly of the cardamum trade, and they are therefore able to impose a uniform price.

The presence of these kanya in the neighbourhood has been an almost unmitigated disaster for the Lepchas. Were they honest it would still be bad, for their proximity has to a considerable extent sapped the Lepchas' energy. It is easier to buy ready-made clothes than to go long journeys to obtain thread and then spin and make up the cloth; and so they buy cheap and shoddy cloth and ready-made clothes; they are colder, dirtier and more ragged than they used to be and their children die of bronchial complaints. In the lean summer months it is easier to get grain on credit than to search for food in the forest; and so, through the line of least resistance they get more and more heavily into debt.

The Lepchas are at a complete disadvantage in dealing with the kanya. Neither they nor anybody outside the caste can read the peculiar script of the Mahawari; but the Lepchas cannot deal with figures and are unable to calculate the prices they should

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 439 receive or the debts they owe; when they get receipts they cannot read them nor tell if they are correct. Though they have a strong conviction that they are badly cheated by the kanya they can do nothing about it; intentional dishonesty in any form is so alien to them that they cannot comprehend or deal with it; they puzzle about the sums that the kanya say they owe; they are convinced that they are too high, but they cannot dispute them and have to pay. Since the kanya have the cardamum monopoly and collect the selling tax the Lepchas cannot take their produce elsewhere; and it is questionable if it would pay them to do so, for against the higher prices obtainable in Gangtok and Kalimpong must be set the cost of porterage. As with many such crops the price is often higher at the end of the season than at the beginning, but the kanya will not let them wait on the market; at the beginning of the season they send representatives to their debtors claiming immediate payment, and threatening Court proceedings if the cardamum is not forthwith handed over. If the kanya would give cash for the surplus crop the Lepchas would be better off; but it is extremely difficult to get ready money, beyond what is needed for tax-paying, out of them. When the cardamum is brought in the kanya claim that they have no money to hand and force goods, either metal ware, or china, or cloth, on to the sellers. And if during the rest of the year people come in to buy goods, rice seed, or cloth, or salt, they refuse to take cash except for quite small sums (say under Rs. 10). They bully and force and persuade the Lepchas to take goods on credit whether they want them or not.

426 Their rates of interest are extortionate. For a maund of rice or Rs. 10 worth of shop goods they demand a maund of cardamum. The cash price of rice at Mangan is Rs. 5/12; the present price of cardamum is Rs. 12 and it has been considerably higher. If there is not sufficient cardamum to pay the debt at harvest time the arrear is carried forward at a maund-and-a-half for a maund or Rs. –/6 for Rs. 1. The rate of interest charged on loans comes to 25% per year at the lowest. According to a reliable informant outside Zongu I was told that according to the laws of Sikkim State no interest is allowed to be charged on goods sold on credit and a maximum of 12½% on cash loans.

Some years ago, it is said, a complaint was made to the Central Court that the kanya were using false measure, taking off 5 seers in the maund (10 lbs. in 80); the kanya were fined Rs. 3,000 and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

they told the Lepchas that they would take it out of them; it is the opinion of the most intelligent of them that they are doing so. The Court has made various rules to try and control the devices of the kanya. Nowadays they are not allowed to make out the bills themselves and if the Lepchas were literate this would be a great help; as it is it is usually the postmaster who makes out the bill and the debtor puts his thumb mark on it. Nowadays too during the buying season there is an official checker—a Nepali. An application was made to Court in the spring of 1937 to have the kanya removed because their proximity was the chief reason for the indebtedness and distress. Some years ago the Court sent out an order that people were not to borrow so much and the kanya were not to cheat so much; but with the shops there on the spot and with cunning and insinuating salesmen, the Lepchas are unable to resist.

With the exception of, I think, only one household (Nariya and Rigya) everybody in Lingthem is indebted to the kanya; the average debt is between Rs. 20 and Rs. 100, but some people are much more heavily indebted. The biggest single debt is that left by Tafoor's father the Muktair; this amounted to Rs. 1,200 and was chiefly contracted through the expense he incurred in rebuilding and re-furnishing the monastery, though a certain amount went to the improvement of his own house and the entertainment of distinguished guests and of the workers from distant villages who helped in the monastery building. Before his death the Mandal organised a village feast for him at which everybody gave cash gifts according to their ability; but the sum was too great for the neighbourhood to liquidate. His heirs, Tafoor and Chudo, have commuted the debt, arranging to pay off both principal and interest at the rate of six maunds of cardamum each every year for ten years. Their personal debts are quite small, and are regulated at the end of each year. Of living people probably the most indebted is the Mandal, who owes about Rs. 500, also chiefly borrowed for entertainment. After him comes Katel; the principal of his debt nobody knows, not even he himself; but out of the sixty maunds of cardamum he harvests (this is almost the biggest crop of anybody in the village) forty have to go in debt.

To illustrate the way the indebtedness works I propose giving the complete history of two debts. In 1933 Datoop incurred considerable expense on account of the funeral of his father's fifth wife, who was a nun, and of his eldest son's marriage. He

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 therefore borrowed Rs. 100. Since 1933 he has made the following payments :—

1934	2 maunds of cardamum	at Rs. 8 –	Rs. 16
1935	3 " "	at Rs. 10 –	Rs. 30
1936	5 " "	at Rs. 12 –	Rs. 60
			Rs. 106
	Less tax at Rs. –/12		Rs. 7/8
			Rs. 98/8

He is told that he still owes Rs. 40, but he hopes this year if the price and harvest is good, to clear off the debt. He does not know what interest is charged : ' nobody can work it out, and you have to pay what the kanya claim. You *can* get cash from them, but it is very hard to do so ; they push goods on to you and try to force you to take them.'

Thirteen years ago, when his step-father died, Kurma *gyapön* borrowed Rs. 100 for the funeral expenses. Cardamum was fetching a high price then ; the next year he gave four maunds and asked the kanya to tear up the bill. Apparently he just tore up a piece of paper, for the next year he reclaimed the money, and as Kurma had no receipt he could not dispute the bill. For a couple of years he did nothing about it and then the kanya sent a policeman to bring him to Court ; Kurma protested that as he had already paid the bill he would go directly to the Maharajah and present the case to him ; and with that intention he took with him a hurricane lantern and an umbrella. The policeman left him at Mangan and Kurma went to buy oil for his lantern ; the kanya saw him and asked what he was doing ; to which Kurma replied that he was setting out for Gangtok to present his case to the Maharajah. The kanya suggested that this was a little drastic, and suggested that he go and fetch Balyoop of Panung to act as an intermediary. Finally a compromise was arranged whereby the debt—both principal and interest—was set at a fixed sum to be paid off at the rate of one maund a year ; Kurma believes that the full value of the maund is being written off. Today he still owes Rs. 40.

Until very recent years the kanya were able to send the police of their own accord to distrain animals and jewels against long-standing debts ; nowadays they are only allowed to do so after an

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

award from the Chief Court at Gangtok. About ten years ago the kanya sent their servants to seize Songpo *youmi*'s cattle and his wife's jewels; but the Mandal stood security for the cattle with his own cardamum and neighbours clubbed together to redeem the jewels. About the same time Patek's father had two bullocks and a milch-cow distrained; fifteen householders banded together to stand security and returned the animals to their owner. Only three years ago the kanya attempted to sell by auction three orange trees, a rice terrace and a cardamum field belonging to Tempa, who had an outstanding debt of Rs. 100. This however was a complete failure for nobody bid at the auction except Tempa himself; he bought back his property at Rs. 60 which cleared his debt. In 1937 a man of Panung had a cardamum field sold by auction, but this was after judgement had been given against him at Court; he and the kanya had both been found guilty of buying and selling cardamum without paying the sales tax. In this case the field was bought by a man of Lik across the river, who paid off the debt and now uses the field as his own.

It is only the internal co-operation of the Lepchas and the paternalistic rulings of the Court which have prevented the Mahawari getting a stranglehold on the lives of the Lepchas of Zongu such as they hold over nearly every Indian peasant and piece of ground. They are such a powerful caste and so incalculably rich that they appear to be able to defy all governments, whether British or Native; they together with the Kabuli and the other leeches are far and away the greatest cause of misery, distress and poverty in the whole Indian sub-continent.

There are also debts inside the village, but they are of a very different nature. If a person is short of crops he will borrow from a neighbour. If he returns the loan within a year he has no interest to pay, if over a year he must repay three measures for every two borrowed, for it is considered that the seed will have produced a harvest. If an animal is borrowed it will simply be replaced or its equivalent in cash given in due course. If the repayment is long postponed a chicken and a load of *chi* will be given when the debt is repaid. There is no interest on cash loans for the first year; after that there is an interest of Rs. –/3 on the rupee and a feast should be given by the debtor to the creditor every year. If after, say, three years the debtor finds that he can only repay the principal he will bring the money, together with a dead fowl and a load of *chi* to the creditor and ask for the interest to be remitted; this is

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 439 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used [386 314] to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingzong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingzong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyoufaat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingzong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingzong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingzong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 pop-eyes or folded eyelids are ugly; so are dimples, too big or too
826 small a mouth, a protub[illegible] bottom or big breasts. Particularly disliked is too big a head or [illegible] curved face', that is a face which in silhouette does not fall into one plane. White and even teeth and a pleasant smile are also desirable. Men and women are considered equal in beauty but a woman is considered to be at her most beautiful at the age of twelve, a man at the age of twenty. It is considered that on the whole a beautiful man will marry a beautiful woman and an ugly man an ugly woman, but this does not happen invariably; and the ugliness of a person is not considered to be a valid reason for refusing a marriage. A woman's beauty is considered to be somewhat spoilt by childbearing.

826 The differences in beauty of children are remarked but little importance is paid to childish beauty as it is considered essentially impermanent. A girl with a big head and eyes and body and feet is considered somewhat man-like and it is thought that she will work slowly in everything. A man with small features and particularly long eyelashes is considered to look like a woman; such a person will be a swift runner and a clever climber of trees and rocks, able to go where others cannot. Apart from these qualities the idea of temperament is not linked at all with physical appearance.

Freckles are considered disfiguring; they are the *tamtoom* of children who are not orphans eating bamboo shoots when the rice is ripe. 'Just as children have parents above them so rice has bamboo above it; consequently children who have no parents are not affected by this.' Black marks on the skin are caused by young people eating pig's stomach. There is no remedy for either of these disfigurements. On the whole beauty is not of much positive emotional importance; it is only when people are markedly unbeautiful that they are liable to be shunned. Beauty adds to the desirability of strangers as sexual partners; I do not think it is remarked at all in people with whom one is familiar. At the big monastery feasts I often asked people whom they considered to be the best-looking person present; when they did not produce an obscene joke as an answer they would usually refuse to pronounce judgement unless there was a stranger present, in which case the stranger was nearly always chosen. Good-quality and clean clothes and jewels add to the self-confidence of the wearer and to a certain extent enhance the wearer's beauty; but clothes and jewels could
832 never be a substitute for beauty. Nobody would think of borrowing
426 other people's clothes or jewels in order to appear finer and richer

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than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision 437 of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced 426 a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu peopl
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, whic
they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept
certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bul
of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it fo
raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradu
ally the money-lender, who all over India is also a genera
trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepcha
easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that th
Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and althoug
most of the older people have been often as far afield a
Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger gener
tion have been further than Gangtok, and only then for
very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of th
608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brother
in various parts of the country in order to facilitate the
trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* i
Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing excep
as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a numb
of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villager
but in these cases the relationship has no economic basi
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even wor
one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can alwa
be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apa
from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regar
almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acqui
ing an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out
the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If on
wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not don
formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natu
[834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with th
womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any pa
ticular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relatio
among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my informatio
on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relatio
ship is carried out only by men.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426 thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185] owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436] ence what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435] pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436 with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435] not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, [185] that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 439 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [291] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

whether they should get warm woollen clothes, or have to put up with shoddy cotton. I should like to think that at least the Tibetan farmer made something out of the transaction; but he, too, is in the hands of the Indian money-lenders in Kalimpong, caught in the intricacies of a vicious circle. The remedy is, of course, obvious; but in present circumstances almost impossible of attainment.

Cardamoms are a State monopoly, and the right to trade in them has been sold to the official State Bankers, an outside concern which, in its turn, also controls all the money-lenders in the State. This is a convenient arrangement for the authorities and saves the provision of numerous extra officials; but even if the State itself assumed control of the business there would be no means of ensuring that the peasants were not cheated, petty (and usually underpaid) officials being much the same all over the East. Under the present system of taxation the people must obviously grow cardamoms, as in no other way can they raise the necessary cash with which to pay their taxes: and from a theoretical point of view their cultivation is a source of extra profit. Indeed, this actually is the case in many parts of Sikkim, where the people are more sophisticated, and better able to safeguard their own interests. There is no doubt that when the Maharaja's predecessors introduced this plant into Sikkim they did so with the motive of improving the people's economic condition; but in those days no one could be expected to foresee the disastrous effects of introducing uncontrolled monetary trading into an illiterate community, organised on socialist lines, which previously had no need of actual cash. As it is, cardamoms are a perfect curse in Jongu.

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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
597 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

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be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the 428
younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property 428
permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there
is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get 597
their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple [592]
and one child, the dependent members of the household usually 422
have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

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One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a 159x girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted [833] one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived [837 826] husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him after he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the [753] presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on [428] his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 428 421 562

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 262

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 552

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 428 *Oong-op* who is prepared to accept her, then the new husband inherits her. Such cases do not often happen, and only then, I think, because, while customary law is quite clear on the point of widow inheritance, there is no means by which it can be enforced. The system of widow inheritance is considered very objectionable by "civilised" Lepchas, and in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts has been completely dropped, even among the non-Christian community; but there is no doubt that it is a satisfactory method of providing for widows in a community which does not permit women to inherit property; and it is certainly less hypocritical than the Hindu system, for instance, in which a widow remains on in the house but does not actually marry any of her deceased husband's brothers. The Lepcha system does at least recognise and regularise the needs of the body; for no one but an ascetic would expect a young (and perhaps attractive) widow to remain chaste for the rest of her life, whatever tribal law had to say on the subject.

It sometimes happens that a widow has no *Oong-op*. Should she be of an age which makes it unlikely that she will procure another husband in the ordinary way, she may go and live with an elder sister, always provided that the latter's husband is willing to receive her. This arrangement, once again, does not call for any very great readjustment; for, as we have already seen, this man too has always had the legal right to copulate with her. But there are always a certain number of middle-aged widowers who find it difficult to persuade a young girl to marry them, human nature being what it is, and so it happens that a widow in these circumstances often marries some older man who has lost his wife and wishes to marry again. The whole system seems admirably constituted so as to provide for everybody. A few actual examples will perhaps help to make the working of it clear:

587 Chano and his elder brother lived together in one house. Both were married; but Chano's wife died childless some years ago. In the meantime Chano had, of course, the right

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open.
[626] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a
●428 woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582]
living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to cooperate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

764
and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing 578
the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the
trance—and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had 775
been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident—it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called 775
Lep, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas 823
of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [624] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

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to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

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622 his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower
[736] from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tamtoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

[431 177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

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622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as
622 uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has
584 arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously
538 pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[43] manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between
177 the two parties.

This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

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the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'. 584

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7] 582 584

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made. 584 [587]

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in 582 582 431

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

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point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

There is one other potential arrangement by which men without much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) 123
or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised [152] me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a [515] different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you 431 ●
go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *aséк* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the 431
Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving 123
more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

431 practically the only present I could give was money, which is not of very great use to them. I had frequent tussles with them on the 123 subject of payment for medical services; I insisted that medicine should not be paid for; they considered that it was shameful to take something for nothing and I frequently had to bully people with bad sores, which I knew I could cure easily, to come up for treatment; they were unwilling to do so because they thought they had nothing suitable to give as presents, and they were ashamed to take something for nothing. An interesting sidelight on their attitude towards gift-giving and strangers is shown by the behaviour of two of the bigger households who on my first arrival refused to sell to the servants either eggs or milk; and later when they got to know us used to come with presents of these commodities for which they refused to accept any return payment except after long argument.

123 When the Lepchas got to know me well they were not at all shy of asking for things; but except for cigarettes, betel nut and iodine or dressings for small cuts they always offered something in return for whatever they asked for and were in no way offended if their requests were refused. They were particularly attracted by illustrated papers and asked frequently to be given them; to a certain extent they recognised very clearly the objects portrayed in drawings and photographs, though their explanations to one another of the situations depicted were, as might well be imagined, very peculiar. I got far more amusement out of hearing three Lepchas explaining to one another what the pictures in *Punch* were about than I ever got out of reading that paper. One or two people asked for [726] pictures of special subjects; Rigya kept on asking for pictures of war because 'he was amazed at them and had never seen or thought of anything like it'; Chudo liked pictures of cars and fashionable life, for he had spent nearly a year in Gangtok as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchens and knew about the lives of Europeans and was able to explain them to his less fortunate compatriots. For him European life consisted chiefly in extremely formal and uncomfortable meals at which there was never enough to eat, interspersed with quarrels of an extremely dramatic nature. In one of the numbers of the *Illustrated London News* there were several reproductions of Chinese Buddhist frescoes and there was quite a competition to possess these among the older and more pious lamas. After I had had some photos enlarged and had shown people their photos I was bombarded with requests for photos of individuals

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes and stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be shot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking through the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses; people would return again and again with their friends with demands to look through these wonderful appliances. 123

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers to amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers in an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking at them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at them and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made them grow?' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow'; or else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say 'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them; but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four 867 123 431

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are [431] paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only [842] on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no pre-
846 conceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to
827 their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[43] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

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793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

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of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273] all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-
born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 ●431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after." When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook Zo*, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to everybody present; but each member of the bride's party receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot such members of the party as are still capable of walking now proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of argument now follows, in which various men express their opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side. He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

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585 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and
431 one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be
585 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as
466 follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank
[431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

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This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom*.

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi*. Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu*, or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku*, who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong*, which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len*, which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

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585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

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587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

● 431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

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796
[262]

3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought contributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

[431]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

574 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took
431 some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring 431
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family ; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dūn, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely : Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mōn, his wife, Ta-dik-kōb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
●1435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426
rty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone
ought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his
tside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one
o is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in
angen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"
The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185]
ing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish
stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never
nsiders the question of whether he can afford a feast or
animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their
ed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they
ve to set aside a certain definite proportion of the car-
mom crop, without regard for what the current rate for
at particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436]
ce what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in
e form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances
the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435]
unds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they
ve to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the
esent time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates
d in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of
ese matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically noth-
g. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436
ith eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435]
t allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should
is be available, nor will they accept any form of payment
the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable
e people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely
ntrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable
liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest
terest is charged at the rate of half the principal per
nnum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The
terest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in
e rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a
alf per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be
ed in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752]
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a 415
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common [435]
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [B7]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.—Analyst]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

586 property, animals and children. If there is only one daughter the parents will divide her marriage price; she can live with either. If there is only one son the spouse keeping him must pay to the other Rs. 40, a cow and a pig and if the father keeps him a length of cloth to the wife, if the wife keeps him a copper vessel* to the husband. The last formal divorce in Lingthem was that of the first Dorjé Lapoon from his third and fourth wives (see Chapter Sixteen); a distant 'aunt' of the Mandal's was also divorced in this way in Sakhyong but there were no children.

If a woman runs away the husband's relatives will come for her and ask for her back or else claim the marriage price; but if the wife is unsatisfactory the husband will merely claim and get compensation in the form of the head and two legs of an ox and a scarf and rupee. Should such a girl re-marry a representative of the husband goes to the marriage; if the representative is the maternal uncle he is given Rs. 3 and half a leg of an ox; if the paternal uncle, Rs. 5 and the rump. By a recent decision of the twelve Mandals of Zongu in council it has been decided that these small recompenses shall be generally accepted for a runaway wife, instead of the large sums demanded earlier.

In the event of a woman showing a marked and continued preference for some man not her husband, the husband will almost always let her go to the lover. If the man cannot be classified as a 'younger brother' he must pay to the injured husband all the marriage expenses which he himself had paid earlier; or alternatively the girl's family will provide another girl as a substitute without further payment, but in that case the payments which the husband would have recovered from the lover will go to the girl's parents. If the lover is classifiable as a 'younger brother' the wife will probably be given to him for a small symbolical payment without any formalities; but it is understood that the younger brother will give special help if the elder brother remarries. Adultery, without really marked preference, is not a reason for divorce; and no anxiety is felt or expressed about the paternity of a man's children.

vi

581 In Lepcha theory marriage is not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups; and they have

[436] * A copper pot is the most conspicuous Lepcha valuable: it is used in a great number of sociological transactions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426 thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185] owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436] ence what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435] pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436 with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435] not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

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VII.

S'iń-bū-li uń-koń [1]) *el-be re to gó s'em,*
Mit tań-gum na-lem [2])
Ki-ruń [3]) *pū-tā uń-koń el-be re to gó s'em*
Gi-yoń-taok fa-leń nam gó mi yu [4])

O! who changed the course of the Singbali [5]) river?
It was the powerful fairy, the sister [6]) who is behind?
O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
It was a powerful like me a *gi-yoń-taok* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-ro kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7]) *tyet só na lé*
Diń-tam-pū kom kat be yet sū yoń s'ū
S'iń mū-yi [8]) *p'i-liń a-t'oń ńań sa gīt-lā yo*
Sāk la ma-run-ne leń la ma-run-ne. [9])

Oh come with me, a little *kar-ro* boy to the cross-roads
And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pū* [10]) rupee
Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 *Yuń-mo tań-ceń kāp ńān bā*
574 *A-zom tup ma-só na-mó*
Hao-dó tań-ceń ok ńān bā
563 *Ñet-* [11]) *tyet a-zom tup ro s'o.*

When a Yungmo's door is shut
One cannot find foot to eat
But when his door is wide open
One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1]) *Uń-koń* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *na-lim*.
[3]) Or *Ñi-ruń*. [4]) Or *yań*.
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'am-ma-ū*. [9]) Or *Mar-yon-ne*.
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[11]) Or *Ket*.

●[436]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

273 not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are
[231] normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has
[758] medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[8] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

262 Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa,
[437] who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages
[252] are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[8] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

437 They have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

157 "A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bare-headed and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

000 "What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particularly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision ●437 of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced 426 a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

114 323 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other [437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas. [415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 764 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
● [438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

532 detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

778 All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are 532 made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives 412 are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought [439] from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which
311 is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the
556 proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FOUR

MONEY LENDERS AND TRADING FRIENDS

i

426 At Mangan, on the main mule road between Tibet and Gangtok, above the only solid bridge which connects Zongu with the 439 mainland, are a group of half-a-dozen mixed stores. These stores are owned by Indians, members of the Mahawari caste, a caste of hereditary money lenders and misers. They have been settled in the neighbourhood about thirty years; before Mangan was developed they lived at Singthem. Ostensibly they are only shopkeepers; in point of fact their chief profit is made by advancing cash and goods to the neighbouring peasants against their produce. Formerly they used to deal with every sort of crop, but since the introduction of cardamum they have concentrated exclusively on that. The State has given these traders, or, as they are locally called, kanya, the monopoly of the cardamum trade, and they are therefore able to impose a uniform price.

The presence of these kanya in the neighbourhood has been an almost unmitigated disaster for the Lepchas. Were they honest it would still be bad, for their proximity has to a considerable extent sapped the Lepchas' energy. It is easier to buy ready-made clothes than to go long journeys to obtain thread and then spin and make up the cloth; and so they buy cheap and shoddy cloth and ready-made clothes; they are colder, dirtier and more ragged than they used to be and their children die of bronchial complaints. In the lean summer months it is easier to get grain on credit than to search for food in the forest; and so, through the line of least resistance they get more and more heavily into debt.

The Lepchas are at a complete disadvantage in dealing with the kanya. Neither they nor anybody outside the caste can read the peculiar script of the Mahawari; but the Lepchas cannot deal with figures and are unable to calculate the prices they should

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 receive or the debts they owe; when they get receipts they cannot read them nor tell if they are correct. Though they have a strong
●439 conviction that they are badly cheated by the kanya they can do nothing about it; intentional dishonesty in any form is so alien to them that they cannot comprehend or deal with it; they puzzle about the sums that the kanya say they owe; they are convinced that they are too high, but they cannot dispute them and have to pay. Since the kanya have the cardamum monopoly and collect the selling tax the Lepchas cannot take their produce elsewhere; and it is questionable if it would pay them to do so, for against the higher prices obtainable in Gangtok and Kalimpong must be set the cost of porterage. As with many such crops the price is often higher at the end of the season than at the beginning, but the kanya will not let them wait on the market; at the beginning of the season they send representatives to their debtors claiming immediate payment, and threatening Court proceedings if the cardamum is not forthwith handed over. If the kanya would give cash for the surplus crop the Lepchas would be better off; but it is extremely difficult to get ready money, beyond what is needed for tax-paying, out of them. When the cardamum is brought in the kanya claim that they have no money to hand and force goods, either metal ware, or china, or cloth, on to the sellers. And if during the rest of the year people come in to buy goods, rice seed, or cloth, or salt, they refuse to take cash except for quite small sums (say under Rs. 10). They bully and force and persuade the Lepchas to take goods on credit whether they want them or not.

426 Their rates of interest are extortionate. For a maund of rice or Rs. 10 worth of shop goods they demand a maund of cardamum. The cash price of rice at Mangan is Rs. 5/12; the present price of cardamum is Rs. 12 and it has been considerably higher. If there is not sufficient cardamum to pay the debt at harvest time the arrear is carried forward at a maund-and-a-half for a maund, or Rs. –/6 for Rs. 1. The rate of interest charged on loans comes to 25% per year at the lowest. According to a reliable informant outside Zongu I was told that according to the laws of Sikkim State no interest is allowed to be charged on goods sold on credit and a maximum of 12½% on cash loans.

Some years ago, it is said, a complaint was made to the Central Court that the kanya were using false measure, taking off 5 seers in the maund (10 lbs. in 80); the kanya were fined Rs. 3,000 and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced
●439 and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used
[386 to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali
314] call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingzong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingzong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyou-faat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingzong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingzong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingzong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Once the full ceremony has been performed the two *ingʒong* are regarded as being in truth sons of one father, and intermarriage between their descendants is forbidden as incestuous for nine generations. The relationship between one *ingʒong* and his *ingʒong*'s wife is a respectful one, and to mark his respect he will usually address her as 'mother'. It would be almost incestuous to sleep with your *ingʒong*'s wife, but a woman does not have to hide from her husband's *ingʒong* as is the case with the *mit* of Nepal.[2] As a general rule the *ingʒong* relationship is hereditary, the sons of *ingʒong* being themselves *ingʒong*; but there is no compulsion about this and if a son does not get on with his father's *ingʒong* and his sons he can set up new relationships. Even with hereditary *ingʒong* the full ceremonial must be performed in each generation. 439 608

Nowadays the Lepchas only set up the relationship with Sikkimese and Tibetans, for the exchange of crops and dye-wood for salt, carpets and metal vessels; they are, they say, no longer friendly with the Nepali and will have no relationships with them. *Ingʒong* is not an exclusive relationship. At the end of March a Sikkimese-Tibetan husband and wife from Lachen arrived in Lingthem with rugs which they wished to exchange for crops, dye-wood and cash. In the whole Talung valley they had eleven *ingʒong*, three of whom were in Lingthem; they spent one night in the house of each. When an *ingʒong* arrives on a visit efforts are made to feast him as well as possible; and when Lepchas go to visit their *ingʒong* they take with them presents of grain, and, if possible, meat. Most of the men of Lingthem have at least three Sikkimese or Tibetan *ingʒong*.

Properly speaking the term *ingʒong* is only applicable to the ceremonial trading-relationship set up between Lepchas and foreigners; but the word is very frequently used between Lepchas with the meaning 'my special friend.' It sometimes happens that two men will drink *chi* together ceremoniously to give some formality to their relationship; but they do not perform the full ceremony for that would entail the nine-generation marriage ban, and in the small community of Zongu, where the choice of wives is already limited, this would speedily produce an impossible state of affairs. It took me a considerable time to straighten out the different implications of the term *ingʒong*, for the word is in constant use, 572

[2] For this fact and for other details in this book concerning the Nepali I am indebted to information derived from Mr. C. J. Morris, either in conversation or from his book '*Gurkhas*' *Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Delhi 1936).

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X/159 *March 22nd.*

Went to exorcism service of *Go-seum* performed for Dátoop's second son, Pichi. Kurma was present assisting in the ceremony. He was more than half drunk and at one moment asked for money to be given to Datoop, which caused very great general embarrassment.

March 24th.

Went down to Pembu's house where the roof was being re-thatched. Kurma arrived rather late in the morning when the work was in full progress, being done fairly haphazardly, and tried to get the work done more efficiently by bossing the other workers, but he was soon forced to give it up.

March 25th.

Kurma came up for a few minutes saying he could not stop and spent a couple of hours discussing marriage regulations.

March 27th.

Kurma and Tinkep, the other *gyapön*, overheard near the monastery saying how indignant they were that at yesterday's Konchen Tyuchen (monastery feast in honour of Kinchenjunga) which was given by Songpo and Katel they were neither of them invited and when they did arrive were not offered anything; they both went away at once.

March 28th.

[439] Two 'Tibetans' arrived from Lachen this morning; they were a man and his wife who came with blankets to sell, or rather exchange against red dye-wood, salt or money. They have eleven *ingzong* in all the valley—three in this village. They will stay a night with each. Last night they stopped with Kurma.

March 29th.

Kurma spent all the morning chiefly talking about Padem and Mun, and talked about his own possession by the Padem.

March 30th.

Visit from the Mandal of Lungdeum; during the day Kurma and Jiroong came up, general talk chiefly about sex. Kurma told an anecdote in pantomime which was one of his favourite stories and often came up. One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
[439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177] days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the 411 824 bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and 411 fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife 412 about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black- 326 smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported 439

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

439 426 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 608 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis. [476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and naturally. [834] There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

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426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, [185] that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes ● 439 every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [291] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

whether they should get warm woollen clothes, or have to 426
put up with shoddy cotton. I should like to think that at 439
least the Tibetan farmer made something out of the transaction; but he, too, is in the hands of the Indian money-lenders in Kalimpong, caught in the intricacies of a vicious circle. The remedy is, of course, obvious; but in present circumstances almost impossible of attainment.

Cardamoms are a State monopoly, and the right to trade 655
in them has been sold to the official State Bankers, an out- 651
side concern which, in its turn, also controls all the money-lenders in the State. This is a convenient arrangement for the authorities and saves the provision of numerous extra officials; but even if the State itself assumed control of the business there would be no means of ensuring that the peasants were not cheated, petty (and usually underpaid) officials being much the same all over the East. Under the present system of taxation the people must obviously grow cardamoms, as in no other way can they raise the necessary cash with which to pay their taxes: and from a theoretical point of view their cultivation is a source of extra profit. Indeed, this actually is the case in many parts of Sikkim, where the people are more sophisticated, and better able to safeguard their own interests. There is no doubt that when the Maharaja's predecessors introduced this plant into Sikkim they did so with the motive of improving the people's economic condition; but in those days no one could be expected to foresee the disastrous effects of introducing uncontrolled monetary trading into an illiterate community, organised on socialist lines, which previously had no need of actual cash. As it is, cardamoms are a perfect curse in Jongu.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.
411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439] ●
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are 278
well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a [441]
deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrowhead but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, *"Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from* [443]
Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear [640]
them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the [226]
gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which
311 is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the
556 proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

misfortune. Today this is not quite so true; the creation of permanent fields requires the renunciation of immediate good for future benefits, for the household which builds these fields will not be able to get as large a harvest as would otherwise be possible. The consequence is that the difference between the richest and the poorest in the community has somewhat increased, and that households which have a proportionately larger number of working adults to dependents are in a temporarily favoured position. So of course is the Mandal,[1] who can use the free labour to which he is entitled to have terraces made for him. 461 556

Up to the present as far as I can tell this new state of affairs has made no important difference to the Lepcha community; their habits of co-operation nullify the differences in wealth. One man even went so far as to say that he would not like to be the richest person in the community, unless everybody else was equally prosperous, as he would have to give all his superfluity to help others. Extra wealth carries with it extra duties; and in point of fact the richest people in Lingthem were also the most heavily indebted. At the same time it must be emphasised that it is the desire of every Lepcha to be rich; when I asked children what they would most like to be, a clever man, or a learned and respected lama, or a great hunter, or a rich man, they would one and all plump for being rich. Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, a member of the most devout lamaist family in Lingthem, and who was himself starting his religious instruction said 'I should like to go and study religion in a Tibetan monastery, but I don't want to go to the State school at Gangtok; the things they teach you there are quite useless, while a lama always gets good presents and feasts. Why, when a rich man dies even the *kané*, the accolyte attending the officiating lama, is given a fine plate and cup and clothes!'[2] 556 [476]

Unless the whole orientation of Lepcha life is changed even greater differences in actual wealth will not fundamentally alter the situation, for there is no possibility of any Lepcha, however rich, exploiting his neighbour, however poor. Help in the work of house or field is always repaid by equivalent help; the most

[1] See Chapter Five, p. 128.

[2] Chimpet's view of the value of secular education is not shared by his father or the other more serious adult members of the community. They have petitioned the State to establish a boarding school in Zongu, for they consider that the extra work entailed by the older children's absence would be counterbalanced by the value of the education received. [871]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

● 461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though [461] they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asék*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even un- 262 693 knowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[937] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But the settled areas of British India have an expensive British administration, for which, in the last instance, the peasant has to pay. This is not to deny, of course, that he gets certain benefits in return: good roads, schools, hospitals, and so on; but these are of more use to people who have already reached the higher economic levels. In the meantime the small tenant cultivator is forced to sell his own rice in order to pay his taxes, not to mention expensive litigation, which seems to increase steadily as conditions become ever more "settled." It seems all wrong to me.

* * * * *

Both men and women work in the fields, and there is no hard-and-fast division of labour between the sexes, although the heavier work is done mostly by men. Woman, as such, is an inferior being, but only because the Lamaist doctrine says so. "Even Buddhist nuns, excepting the very few so-called incarnations of celestial Bodhisats, are given an inferior position scarcely higher than lay devotees"; and to be born as a woman is a definite step backwards in the march towards Nirvana, the freedom from reincarnation, which is the goal of all true Buddhists. But this idea is completely foreign to the Lepcha, who does not recognise any inherent distinction between the temperament of the sexes; there is with them practically no such thing as "men's work" and "women's work."

Dr. Margaret Mead was the first to point out that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced. Two of the tribes she studied in New Guinea had "no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious rôles, different skills, different vulnerabilities to evil, magic and supernatural influences. The Arapesh believe that painting in colour is appropriate only to men, and the Mundugumor consider fishing an essentially feminine task. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability are inalienably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

associated with one sex (as opposed to the other) is entirely lacking. This may seem strange to a civilisation which in its sociology, its medicine, its slang, its poetry, and its obscenity accepts the socially defined differences between the sexes as having an innate basis in temperament and explains any deviation from the socially determined rôle as abnormality of native endowment or early maturation. . . .

"The knowledge that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced is congenial to every programme that looks forward to a planned order of society. It is a two-edged sword that can be used to hew a more flexible, more varied society than the human race has ever built, or merely to cut a narrow path down which one sex or both sexes will be forced to march, regimented, looking neither to the right nor to the left. It makes possible a Fascist programme of education in which women are forced back into a mould that modern Europe had fatuously believed to be broken for ever. It makes possible a Communist programme in which the two sexes are treated as nearly alike as their different physiological functions permit." (*Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1935.)

562 Everything we saw in Jongu bears ample witness to the correctness of her views; and such differences as there are between the sexes are undoubtedly culturally conditioned, no inherent variation in temperament between them being recognised. This will perhaps be more apparent when we come to the subject of marriage.

462 Although we did not collect actual statistics, it is my impression that the Lepcha woman does considerably more physical work than the man. In addition to working all day in the fields, she has to cook, tend the children, and keep the house in order, and is often out searching for fuel: but the man is not above nursing the baby or cooking his meal when necessary. But since so many of the men are Lamas, and in consequence required to spend a great deal of time in the performance of their useless duties, the bulk of the work falls to the women. This is not, however, to relegate them to the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs.

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain.

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose.

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[584] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the
● 462 father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
[567] and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

142
231
482
412
415
291
857

25. Lepcha children starting for field work

142
291
243
462

26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ese reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will 342
kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels.

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest 353
uses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough
loured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved door-
ys and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within
d without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas
ssess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable
xterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas
e capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done
rpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired;
t such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien
aft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the
ite. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for [463]
ne years and who had done the fine work in most of the monas-
ries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood
his house.

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to 532
ecially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood 874
as the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of
afoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with
creasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural
ropensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor,
ho advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine
ears at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was
e following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled
ood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer
f white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a
lack outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that
e board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model
nd the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the
ext model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five
r six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé;
hen nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's
ody naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure
oloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred
ictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the
haribu later learned others by copying existing models.

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approxi- 532
nations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their
earness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chōtembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopōn. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chōtembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [291]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

so as to gratify the devils which have taken up their abode in the neighbourhood so that they shall not trouble the work in progress. Then the four corner-posts and the centre post are set up, and the low stone walls, on which the house will rest, are built. The building should always start from the east. After the pillars and stone walls have been set up straight by an overseer the building proceeds without direction, the walls, flooring, ceiling, rafters and finally the thatch being built. When people know that a house is being built or repaired they come to help spontaneously; they are given no pay or wages of any sort except a meal at the end of the day; but they know that they in their turn will receive help when they need it. Men, women and children all lend a hand at the various tasks; but women are considered incapable of handling the biggest pieces of timber.

Some time after its completion the house must be consecrated by lamas and Mun with the ceremony of *Tashi chéné*; ideally this should be performed as soon as the house is completed and repeated twice in subsequent years; but it is often not done immediately for the owner may not possess the ox and other necessary materials. When the first meal is eaten in the completed house some old and experienced man (not the house-owner himself, but it does not matter who else) must make a small hole in the roof immediately above the fireplace and throw out a live ember and some water; this is done so that the smoke may go out properly and not fill the house.

The ceremony of *Tashi chéné* is as follows. First of all incense leaves are burned to pacify the demons who live in the earth below the house and who may have inhabited the trees of which the house is built. Then a live ox is dedicated by a Mun to all the gods, slaughtered and cut up; the head, right foreleg and left hind-leg (these portions are called *ga-zook*) are given to the carpenters who have worked on the house as their fee. After this a lamaist ceremony, with music and readings from the appropriate books, is performed, at the end of which the chief lama present (if possible one of the Dorjé Lapoon)[11] will anoint the house-pillars with blood, *chi*, liquor and butter, starting with the western pillar and proceeding to

[11] Dorjé Lapoon is the title given to the oldest, wisest, and most revered lamas; it is not strictly translatable: dorjé is the sacred 'thunderbolt' which is part of the lama's sacred paraphernalia; lapoon means teacher. In works dealing with Tibet the title is usually translated as 'abbot', but this term seems to me inappropriate for non-resident dignitaries.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FIVE

LAW AND ORDER

i

Zongu, as part of the Maharajah of Sikkim's private estate, is administered for him by one of the Kazi, or hereditary ministers and landowners. It is at present under the Rhennock Kazi, who has succeeded the Mali Kazi. Except on very rare occasions the Kazi does not visit the reserve; the Mandals and Muktair pay relatively frequent visits to Gangtok to pay over the taxes to him and to consult him on any problems of internal administration.

Administratively Zongu is divided into twelve villages, each with a Mandal[1] at its head. Until the beginning of this century there were no intermediaries between the Mandals and the Kazi in charge; but some thirty years ago, at the instance of the Maharani, the aunt of the present Maharajah, the office of Muktair[2] was instituted. The Muktair is superior to the Mandals; he can deal with misdemeanours carrying a fine of not more than Rs. 60, while the Mandals can only deal with fines of Rs. 30 or less; he has to supervise all tax-accounts, and visits each village twice yearly to inspect the fields and see that grain has not been planted in excess of the amount on which tax has been paid; he has also to make a register of births and deaths. At first he was also responsible for the collection of taxes, but Tafoor's father, when he held the office, made a muddle of this job, and the actual collection and payment of the monies reverted to the Mandals. I was told that the Muktair receives as salary 4 per cent of the money collected and 4 annas on each house, but the sum seems to me excessive.

The history of this office of Muktair gives a good illustration of

[1] The term *Mandal* is not a Lepcha nor even a Sikkimese word. It is the common word for the head of the village throughout Northern India. It is however in universal use among the Lepchas, having completely displaced the Sikkimese-Tibetan *La-chen* and the Lepcha *Jem-mi*.

[2] The Sikkimese-Tibetan term is *Tong-yoop*.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is
531 the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an
531 artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at
159 Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of
874 its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he
465 took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[446] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

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every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

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seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone 831
appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); [273]
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topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and
431 one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be
585 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as
466 follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank
[431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

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This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom*.

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi*. Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu*, or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku*, who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride's party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong*, which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len*, which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

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346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [386] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a 778 balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[188] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

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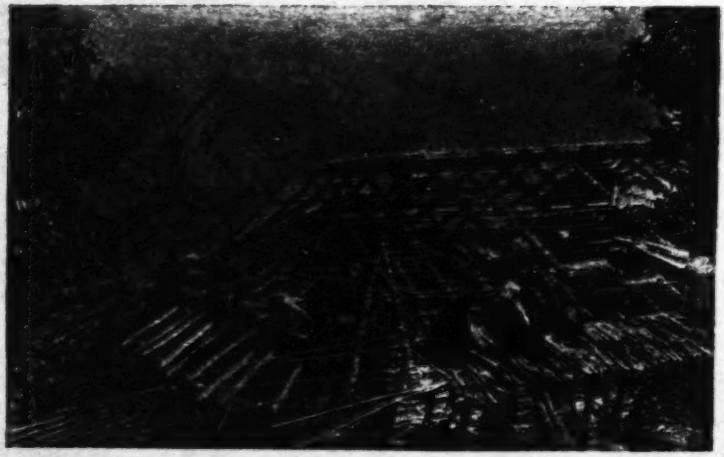

EVERYBODY HELPS WITH THE THATCHING OF PEMBU'S ROOF

[facing p. 68]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 so as to gratify the devils which have taken up their abode in the neighbourhood so that they shall not trouble the work in progress. Then the four corner-posts and the centre post are set up, and the low stone walls, on which the house will rest, are built. The building should always start from the east. After the pillars and stone walls have been set up straight by an overseer the building proceeds without direction, the walls, flooring, ceiling, rafters and finally the thatch being built. When people know that [476] a house is being built or repaired they come to help spontaneously; they are given no pay or wages of any sort except a meal at the end of the day; but they know that they in their turn will receive help when they need it. Men, women and children all lend a hand at the various tasks; but women are considered incapable of handling the biggest pieces of timber.

Some time after its completion the house must be consecrated by lamas and Mun with the ceremony of *Tashi chéné*; ideally this should be performed as soon as the house is completed and repeated twice in subsequent years; but it is often not done immediately for the owner may not possess the ox and other necessary materials. When the first meal is eaten in the completed house some old and experienced man (not the house-owner himself, but it does not matter who else) must make a small hole in the roof immediately above the fireplace and throw out a live ember and some water; this is done so that the smoke may go out properly and not fill the house.

The ceremony of *Tashi chéné* is as follows. First of all incense leaves are burned to pacify the demons who live in the earth below the house and who may have inhabited the trees of which the house is [782] built. Then a live ox is dedicated by a Mun to all the gods, slaughtered and cut up; the head, right foreleg and left hind-leg [465] (these portions are called *ga-zook*) are given to the carpenters who have worked on the house as their fee. After this a lamaist ceremony, with music and readings from the appropriate books, is performed, at the end of which the chief lama present (if possible one of the Dorjé Lapoon)[11] will anoint the house-pillars with blood, *chi*, liquor and butter, starting with the western pillar and proceeding to

[11] Dorjé Lapoon is the title given to the oldest, wisest, and most revered lamas; it is not strictly translatable: dorjé is the sacred 'thunderbolt' which is part of the lama's sacred paraphernalia; lapoon means teacher. In works dealing with Tibet the title is usually translated as 'abbot', but this term seems to me inappropriate for non-resident dignitaries.

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misfortune. Today this is not quite so true; the creation of permanent fields requires the renunciation of immediate good for future benefits, for the household which builds these fields will not be able to get as large a harvest as would otherwise be possible. The consequence is that the difference between the richest and the poorest in the community has somewhat increased, and that households which have a proportionately larger number of working adults to dependents are in a temporarily favoured position. So of course is the Mandal,[1] who can use the free labour to which he is entitled to have terraces made for him.

Up to the present as far as I can tell this new state of affairs has made no important difference to the Lepcha community; their habits of co-operation nullify the differences in wealth. One man even went so far as to say that he would not like to be the richest person in the community, unless everybody else was equally prosperous, as he would have to give all his superfluity to help others. Extra wealth carries with it extra duties; and in point of fact the richest people in Lingthem were also the most heavily indebted. At the same time it must be emphasised that it is the desire of every Lepcha to be rich; when I asked children what they would most like to be, a clever man, or a learned and respected lama, or a great hunter, or a rich man, they would one and all plump for being rich. Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, a member of the most devout lamaist family in Lingthem, and who was himself starting his religious instruction said 'I should like to go and study religion in a Tibetan monastery, but I don't want to go to the State school at Gangtok; the things they teach you there are quite useless, while a lama always gets good presents and feasts. Why, when a rich man dies even the *kané*, the accolyte attending the officiating lama, is given a fine plate and cup and clothes!'[2]

Unless the whole orientation of Lepcha life is changed even greater differences in actual wealth will not fundamentally alter the situation, for there is no possibility of any Lepcha, however rich, exploiting his neighbour, however poor. Help in the work of house or field is always repaid by equivalent help; the most

[1] See Chapter Five, p. 128.

[2] Chimpet's view of the value of secular education is not shared by his father or the other more serious adult members of the community. They have petitioned the State to establish a boarding school in Zongu, for they consider that the extra work entailed by the older children's absence would be counterbalanced by the value of the education received.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agriculnral produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

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439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the
608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis.
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natur-
[834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

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241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

vi

776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

habit of seeing devils, whose wife, like her husband, had died of dysentery. 159X

About twelve years ago Jiroong set up '*ingtong*' with Balyoop, a lama living at Panung. His chief reason was so as to have a substitute for his dead brothers to help him and his children. (Balyoop himself is childless.) Also they were fond of one another. Balyoop is considerably older than he is; Mrs. Jiroong calls him 'father' out of respect.

Jiroong considers that the happiest time of life is an easy old age if you have your health and children or others to help you. He said that he considered Pong-ring lucky because all the villagers feed him. (This old widowed man is covered with sores and full of disease and most people consider he would be happier dead.) He considers, however, that Serving and Kahlyeu are unlucky because they are more or less alone. He says that the best thing in life is to do good to others.

He first said he would like to be the richest man in the village and then withdrew his statement saying that all he wanted was enough to eat and wear for him and his. He is worried and anxious and timid. He has been unfortunate in both his marriages.[9] He has no desire to re-live any early part of his life again.

He has three small rice terraces; he cannot have more as he has nobody to help make them; the only men in the household are himself and his nephew Tobgé, and they are busy getting the crops without attending to building terraces. Neither he nor any of his brothers have ever contemplated or threatened suicide. Jiroong can swim in the river in winter; he learnt from watching others and trying. The only other person who is known to be able to swim is old Songpo. [481]

Jiroong is a particularly industrious person and is slowly becoming one of the wealthier figures in the village.

[9] It will be remembered that it was his wife who was the cause of all the major quarrels in the village in the last three years. See Chapter Five, pp. 140–142.

[p. 430 is blank]

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491 footway, which is only about six inches wide. Although the bridge rocks and sways in the most alarming fashion there is not the slightest danger provided one keeps one's head: one slip, however, and there is nothing more to be done; one is precipitated into the river below, from the whirlpools and currents of which there is no escape. The Lepchas themselves cross these bridges at a trot, at the same time carrying a heavy load. [481]

Palden warned me that it would be disastrous to cross in boots; so, very gingerly, I started off in my stockinged feet. My instinct was to go blindly forward with my eyes closed, but it was necessary to select each separate foothold with care, at the same time carefully sliding one's hands forward along the "handrail" each time one took a step forward: it was soon obvious that if all else failed I could never earn my living as a tight-rope walker. The whole trick of crossing these bridges consists in keeping one's gaze fixed, as far as possible, on some spot on the opposite bank. When I was nearing the centre I foolishly looked down at the river; the effect was as though the water was standing still, and the bridge itself appeared to be moving rapidly upstream. Fortunately, someone on the far side shouted to me to look straight ahead, or I think I might have lost my balance. For a second everything appeared to be going round and round in a circle; but I had sufficient control not to loose my handholds. I arrived on the other side pouring with sweat and with a pounding heart. Gratefully, I replaced my boots. I was filled with ridiculous self-satisfaction, which the coolies' unrestrained laughter at my clumsiness did nothing to damp.

We reached the camping site just as dusk was falling. It was still pouring with rain and the valley was filled with clouds. The tent was wet through, and most of my bedding was damp. I did not mind it a bit: it was grand to be alone, and on the move again.

2nd June:

A Lama from Talung arrived during the night. He says

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when
they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

133 Zongu is a roughly triangular portion of very mountainous land, approximately forty miles on each side, bounded on the south-east by the river Teesta, on the north-east by the river Talung and on the third side by the mountains south of Kinchenjunga. The land is excessively precipitous; the rivers are at about 2,000 feet above sea-level and the average height of the hills is about 12,000 feet; but the peaks rise to more than double that height, Kinchenjunga at the head of the Talung valley, which dominates the western horizon, being over 28,000 feet. Except for a few artificially levelled places there is probably not a hundred square yards of flat ground in the whole district; and the tracks are too [482 484] steep and too uneven for it to be possible to employ mules, let alone horses; all travelling has to be done on foot, and all goods transported by human porterage.

361 The river valleys are hot, steamy and somewhat malarious, and consequently there are no houses right on the river, though the ground is used for raising subtropical plants; there are however occasional houses about 500 feet higher up. Most of the houses and cultivated land are between 3,500 feet and 7,500 feet above sea-level, a relatively narrow band above the two rivers, though [311] occasionally fields are made at even higher altitudes. Above the cultivated land is the forest in which wild produce is gathered, a [136 137] decreasing amount of hunting done, and to which the cattle are sent up to pasture in the winter months. Above the forest level comes first the rhododendron forest, and then the snows, rarely visited [278] except by hunters searching either for ibex and musk-deer or for the wild aconite which forms the basis of their arrow poison.

132 The climate of the Talung valley is excessively wet, even for the Himalayas; it is only in the autumn months—from the end of September to the end of November—that there is no rain.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

vi

776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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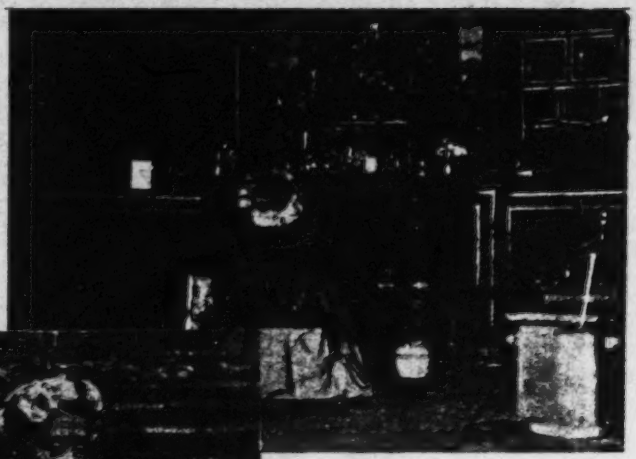

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[Facing p. 124]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not
231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from
857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer
224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen,
868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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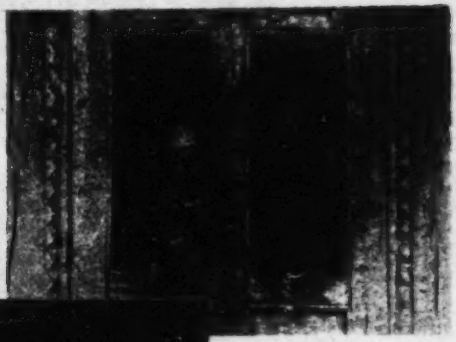
Happy family.



[285]

Lepcha girl.

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Tafoor's two daughters.

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Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Ashyek*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

[Facing p. 226]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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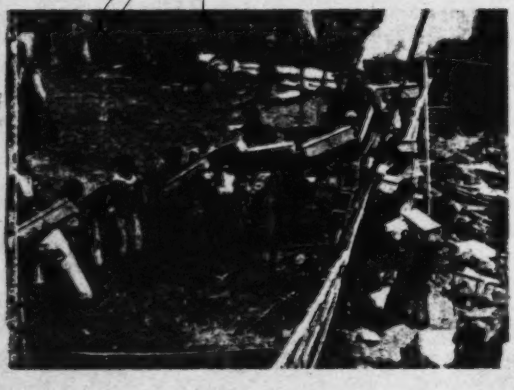

The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.

412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[68] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 412 The most important of the implements used for farming is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[17] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 174 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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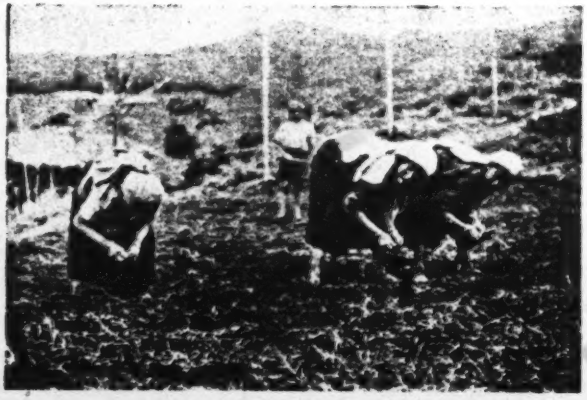
25. Lepcha children starting for field work



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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

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42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, his wife being four years younger. He had already started his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years, when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told me they were very anxious while he was away from home and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him. Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was still away from home his parents decided that it was time for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi came home the following year he at once made it clear that he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

i

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●484 Except for such state servants[1], and for the Mandal and those who accompany him to Gangtok to take in the taxes, the Lepchas of Zongu have little call to travel; they occasionally go to shop in Gangtok or to visit their *ingzong* on the Tibetan border; but it would seem as if such journeys are undertaken for the love of change, rather than for any real necessity.

Twelve years ago a party of six men and two women, including Tafoor, his father the Muktair, and his uncle the second Dorjé Lapoon went on a pilgrimage to the valley of Kathmandhu in Nepal. They were away for two months, spending twenty-three days on the journey each way; in India they travelled by train, which surprised but did not frighten them. As far as I know Tafoor is the only young Lepcha of Lingthem who has been outside Sikkim; a number of the older men visited Darjeeling and Tibet in their youth.

1/1 [i.e., servants to the Maharajah and now trained as State carpenters.—Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Nazir had forgotten or lost the matches entrusted to him, and we could get neither light nor fire. The best part of the time was spent in trying native dodges to obtain a spark, in which D. took an active interest, but the wood was not the right kind, and was, besides, so wet that nothing could be done. Toomhang, the Lepcha, was with us, as he always preferred to be when not actually ordered to keep with and bring up the coolies as he should have done, but we liked gossiping with the fine old man, who was of much too gentle a nature to be a coolie driver. When he told us there would be at least five feet of snow on Tiphu at our last camping ground, by the morning, we knew he was right, and consoled ourselves for all our troubles at the thought of the happy escape we had had."

FLORENCE DONALDSON, 1900.

The roads.

"The *pugdandy* (footpath) now led us up the hill, and the hard climbing we had to do helped to take my thoughts off an experience calculated to unnerve one. In some places we had to scale a projecting rock by means of two pieces of the trunk of a tree with notches at alternate intervals to put one's feet in. This Sikkim style of Jacob's ladder is well enough for the barefooted native, but not at all easy for the leather-shod European. I had looped up my habit skirt before starting, but found it very much in the way all the morning." (But you would probably have found it easier walking in those woollen knickers.)

Ibid.

Sikkim bungalows (old style).

"There were two rooms in the curiously constructed rest-house; the floor and roof being of the same material and as fragile as the walls. We had to take off our boots before we could walk on the yielding floor. Our camp bedsteads would have gone through it, so our bedding was spread on the raised floor which had all the effect of a spring bed,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little
136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the
346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the
[77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to
792 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142 dark brown or black. I took no measurements, for such behaviour
[141] would have been too disconcerting, but I calculate that the mean height for men is about 68 inches, the women being three or four inches shorter. The people are solidly and rather squarely built, with, like most mountain races, very strongly developed calves and
302 leg muscles. The men, with the exception of the lamas, wear their hair in a long plait reaching down to the waist; the women also
291 plait or braid their hair. Although the dresses of the two sexes differ in detail both wear skirt-like garments down to the knees with the legs and feet bare, and it is often extremely difficult to guess a person's sex when seen from behind. Very few Lepcha men
142 have any facial hair, and when I have shown my photographs to friends there have usually been a great number of mistakes in the sex of the subjects.

V

487 The first two stages of the road from Gangtok to Tibet are Dikchu and Singhik. The mule-road follows the left bank of the Teesta river; a little before Dikchu on the right bank starts the reserve of Zongu. About a mile before Singhik there is a tiny settlement called Mangan; it is situated about a thousand feet above the river. Mangan is a halting-place for muleteers going to and from Tibet; it is a small bazaar and contains the only stores within a radius of about twenty miles. There are half-a-dozen stores with a cheap stock of mixed goods; they are owned by members of the Indian Mahawari caste; their dealings with the Lepchas will be described later. There is also there a government-trained dispenser, a postmaster (the post from Gangtok is brought out twice weekly, on which days the post-office is open), an elementary schoolmaster, all these three government officials, a couple of Tibetan prostitutes for the use of the muleteers, and some liquor shops where the native commercial spirit, *arak*, can be bought. There are perhaps thirty houses.

Branching off from the main mule road on the left is a narrow and extremely precipitous path which descends to the Teesta; at this place the river is crossed by a plank bridge with steel supports; this has recently replaced the fragile and giddy-looking Lepcha bridge made entirely of bamboo, and represents the only permanent link between Zongu and the rest of Sikkim. For a little while the path on the other side skirts the river, passing on its way a substantial wooden shed which has been erected to receive the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *choten*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu. 487

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation. 346 [784]

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment. [249]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of a deeper yellow-green where the cardamum grows. Scattered here and there among the prevailing greens may be seen the glow of a fruit-tree in flower, and nearby the low thatched roof of a house, barely distinguishable until you are close upon it. The paths are the faintest tracks, invisible until you come upon them; there is no main road, nothing to guide your way; except that there are usually more stones—for the bigger stones will have been removed from the neighbouring fields and piled on the path to make drier walking in the wet weather—there is little to indicate what is path and what merely rough ground. Overtowering and dwarfing all the works of man are the enormous ramparts of the gleaming snows, cutting short a quarter of the horizon in almost every direction. You can see that the land is in part cultivated and inhabited, but the part seems insignificant; in the battle between man and nature, nature seems everywhere the winner.

That is the landscape for the European; for the Lepcha not a single feature is the same. Except when they refer to them as the habitations of the high Gods, the Lepchas do not remember the mountains; they do not lift up their eyes, they look down on the ground. Every piece of land is meaningful for them, for every piece, unless it be the home of a supernatural, is, has been, or will be cultivated. They think and speak of their country as a poor country, demanding disproportionate labour for the food they require for themselves and their families. For them the land is not a friend; it is a material; and when they look at it they see therein the work and sweat they have fed it with all their lives. Every piece of land, every step they take, reminds them of the past and the present, of their own work and struggles, and those of their neighbours; the houses and fences they have helped to build, the land they have helped to clear and weed and harvest, the places where they have played as children, or, later, met for amorous encounter. They see too the cliffs and rocks and lonely trees where dwell the devils who menace and destroy their otherwise peaceful and happy existence; these visible signs remind them of those evil forces—disease and death, blight and famine, childlessness and enmity and quarrelling—that mar a life which, though hard enough, would otherwise be easy and friendly, full of health and happiness. The Lepchas do not see the landscape; they see the records of their lives, and of the lives of their ancestors, and of the lives to come of their children.

[p. 82 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[387] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[438] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285] ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
[415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left about ten o'clock, in pouring 431
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ott swollen so much from the leech-bites that I could not get my boots on. It was such a relief to walk on a proper path [487] again that the eighteen miles into Gangtok passed in a flash, and I did not even notice the unevenness of the cobbled path, which on other occasions has seemed so tiring. We reached the bungalow at half-past five, only to find it filled with tourists from Darjeeling. However, the custodian fixed me up in a small shack normally reserved for Tibetan travellers, where I gratefully tore the stockings off my bleeding legs. Leech-bites are not painful; but after the first day they itch in a most intolerable manner.

I was feeling tired and hungry, and not in the best of moods, when one of those desiccated spinsters with a passion for animals, a type peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon race, descended upon me. I produced my politest smile, in the hope that she might at least offer me a cup of tea; but it was not for this that she had come: "Did I know if it was true," she said, "that the Everest Expeditions had slept in this bungalow on their way to Tibet? It would be thrilling to think that one was actually occupying the same bungalow, would it not?" I winked at the bungalow guardian, an old friend, who knew sufficient English to follow the conversation, but before I could think of a suitably fatuous answer she had rattled on again: "I wonder if you could tell me," she said, "what it would cost for me to send my cage of parrots from Calcutta to Bombay?" Fortunately, the arrival of my baggage saved me from further encounters.

6th June, 1937:

Left Gangtok by car in pouring rain at half-past four and arrived at the Odlings' house in Kalimpong just as they were sitting down to dinner; and at once became conscious of my travel-stained appearance. Freddy Chapman, just back from climbing Chomolhari, also there *en route* to England. There is undoubtedly something to be said in favour of polished tables, good food, gleaming

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491

A Lepcha bridge.

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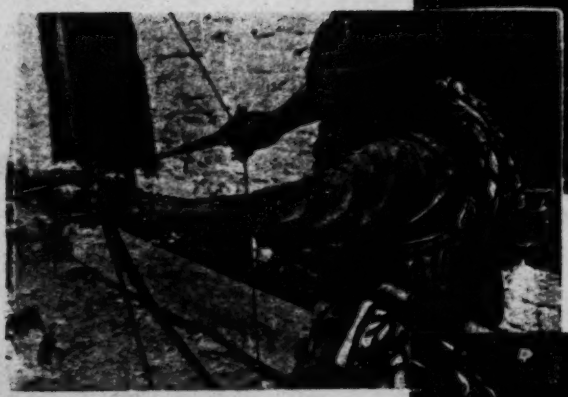
142



Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

● 491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

123 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
[491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491 As for the roads, these, including the bridges, are all easily negotiable by the most timid. Those of active habit may walk all the marches without excessive fatigue, the more leisurely-inclined may ride on ponies, readily obtainable from Darjeeling, while ladies, not equal to the exertion, may be carried in dandies over all the bungalow routes."

Tours in Sikkim.

Awful influence of the Lakeland poets.

000 "For persons travelling solely for pleasure, and without any specific hobby, the visions of the snows, the ever-changing effects of light and shadow on the frost-clad mountains, the fragrant air of the woodlands, or the life-giving breezes of the mountain-tops will be joys sufficient in themselves, while those interested in any special pursuit such as sketching, photography, botany, natural history, etc., will find Sikkim an ideal field for these occupations."

Ibid.

Sikkim can be particularly recommended for the study of "etc.," which, I must confess, is my chosen hobby.

You have been warned!

"Ladies will find woollen knickers or combinations a comfort when crossing the higher passes."

Ibid.

How to travel.

PART I. PROFESSIONAL.

"It will be found most satisfactory to walk down hill and ride up, a method of progression best for man and beast. The *syces* should be made to follow close, and they may carry light things such as hand-cameras, field-glasses, waterproofs and articles which may be required from time to time on the march. A halt for lunch may be made at any pretty or convenient place, and the tiffin-coolie should be able to make all the arrangements for an alfresco meal. He should never be far away while on the march, and a good man will

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

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had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

● 491 footway, which is only about six inches wide. Although the bridge rocks and sways in the most alarming fashion there is not the slightest danger provided one keeps one's head: one slip, however, and there is nothing more to be done; one is precipitated into the river below, from the whirlpools and currents of which there is no escape. The Lepchas them-
[481] selves cross these bridges at a trot, at the same time carrying a heavy load.

Palden warned me that it would be disastrous to cross in boots; so, very gingerly, I started off in my stockinged feet. My instinct was to go blindly forward with my eyes closed, but it was necessary to select each separate foothold with care, at the same time carefully sliding one's hands forward along the "handrail" each time one took a step forward: it was soon obvious that if all else failed I could never earn my living as a tight-rope walker. The whole trick of crossing these bridges consists in keeping one's gaze fixed, as far as possible, on some spot on the opposite bank. When I was nearing the centre I foolishly looked down at the river; the effect was as though the water was standing still, and the bridge itself appeared to be moving rapidly upstream. Fortunately, someone on the far side shouted to me to look straight ahead, or I think I might have lost my balance. For a second everything appeared to be going round and round in a circle; but I had sufficient control not to loose my hand-holds. I arrived on the other side pouring with sweat and with a pounding heart. Gratefully, I replaced my boots. I was filled with ridiculous self-satisfaction, which the coolies' unrestrained laughter at my clumsiness did nothing to damp.

We reached the camping site just as dusk was falling. It was still pouring with rain and the valley was filled with clouds. The tent was wet through, and most of my bedding was damp. I did not mind it a bit: it was grand to be alone, and on the move again.

2nd June:

A Lama from Talung arrived during the night. He says

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

1491

A Lepcha bridge.

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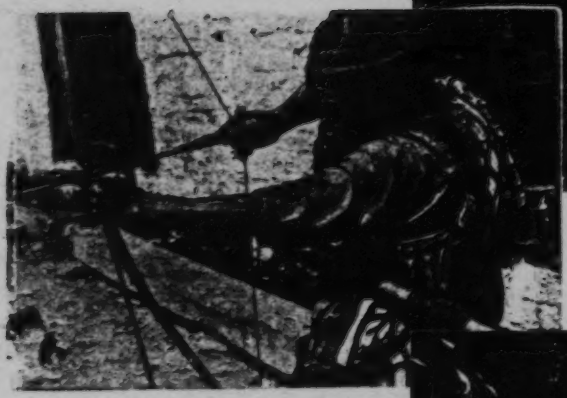

Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talang Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of cooking dishes and compounding the various ingredients; but on the whole the material provided is of more importance than the cooking. Except that a meal with meat is universally preferred to one without there does not seem to be any particularly favourite food; Tafoor voiced the general opinion when he said his favourite dish was *chi*. I did not get enough detailed menus to be able to state with certainty how often meat is usually eaten inside the household; from such information as I have got I should say richer people eat it three or four times a week, poor people once or twice. When it is available it is eaten in the morning and evening. 262

Lepcha diet is relatively monotonous, notably less highly spiced than the food of the Nepali or Indians; there are no devices for tempting jaded palates; food is to satisfy hunger, and enough is as bad as a meal. A feast definitely implies over-eating, and it is quite a common subject among old people to deplore that their powers of over-eating are failing; that once upon a time they could eat fourteen pounds of meat in a day, and now they cannot manage four with comfort! These actual figures were used by Adér, who is well over seventy and has lost half his teeth.

As can be seen, the Lepchas have, for a primitive people, a remarkably high standard of living, as far as food and drink is concerned; it is certainly far higher than that of the Lepchas outside Zongu or any of the neighbouring peoples that I know of. Levelling out the answers I have received and my own observations, I should say that the average consumption of grain annually by an adult Lepcha is about 400 lbs.; besides that about another 300 lbs. is consumed for *chi*. These quantities naturally do not allow for entertainment or gifts. There are three households who perhaps do not quite reach this standard, those of Dunbi, Nahyeun and Pargeut. Dunbi is said to be the poorest man in the village, but this is chiefly his own fault, for he sits about drinking and gossiping instead of working. Nahyeun is a young man fairly recently married; he is reputed to be Dunbi's bastard and is himself not over energetic. He recently married Tobgé's sister and they have set up house on their own because his wife did not agree with the two wives of Asang, with whom he formerly lived; they consequently have no reserves and few permanent fields. The third poor man, Pargeut, is really unfortunate; he has six small children of which only the two eldest are of an age to help him, and they are girls betrothed outside the village; he has also a very

511 ● [262] [556]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

511 old mother to support, and he suffers himself from some sort of recurrent fever.

These households, and a few others, may get short of grain in the early summer and be driven to look for food in the forest to supplement the gifts they get; most households have usually a a small surplus at the end of the year which they use for extra feasting and presents. From the point of view of crops, though not [556] necessarily of money, the richest householders are the Mandal, Tafoor, Takneum *youmi*, Tingkep and Chelim. The first two are considered to be the best hosts, at whose house the finest food and drink is obtained.

V

231 Although of secondary importance as far as diet is concerned, domestic animals play a considerable rôle in the life of the Lepchas. Nearly all the ceremonies of the Mun demand animal sacrifices; animals are essential for the socio-religious celebrations of birth, marriage and death; and consequently people with few or no animals who get ill or have children or marry or die are at a considerable disadvantage and have to borrow animals for these ceremonies. Much of the indebtedness incurred with money lenders has been for the purchase of animals. Though the Lepcha can, and often does, borrow animals from his neighbours, he appears to feel a discomfort in being indebted to a friend which he does not feel towards the money lenders.

[556] By far the most important animal is oxen;[7] they are still the chief sign of wealth and a person with twenty head of cattle is considered a rich man. Their meat is the most esteemed and at important feasts, or if a person wants to make a display, it is always an ox which is killed. They are never used as beasts of burden (no animals are so used) but occasionally for ploughing; a certain amount of milk and butter is got from milch-cows. Only the most savage bulls are castrated. Cows are not mated and no pedigrees are kept.

Except for young calves, milch cows, and bullocks temporarily in use for ploughing, the animals are never tethered or herded; they wander all over the common land round the village where pasturage and wood-gathering are free; every evening they

[7] The Lepcha cattle have no hump; they resemble small European rather than Indian cattle. They have small horns and every variety and combination of colouring.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [511]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
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sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
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return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to be paid or received; one or two friends may come in to drink *chi* and everybody will sit around and gossip, or perhaps one will tell one of the long stories which take several evenings to repeat. The younger children can listen to the conversation if they wish to; if not they can go and amuse themselves; very little notice is taken of them, and, except possibly for malicious gossip, no subject is avoided because of their presence. A few people own oil lamps, but for the majority the only illumination is the wood-fire. A couple of hours after the evening meal the bedding is brought out of the boxes where it is stored during the day and laid out with the more or less padded wooden pillows at the appropriate places round the walls. People sleep on a cloth, generally quilted, and have another blanket as covering; Lepchas never sleep with their heads under the bedclothes as they think they would then suffocate.

When the bedding is laid out the fire is damped down with ashes and darkness is presumed to reign; people undress more or less, according to their personal habits (most adults remove their outer clothes and sleep in their drawers, but some, especially poorer people who have not sufficient coverings, retain the formerly general habit of sleeping naked near the fire) and settle down in their proper sleeping places for the night. Everybody has his own mattress, but married couples share pillows and blankets. The smallest infants sleep in their mother's arms; but as soon as they are big enough they are given their own bedding, for fear they should wet their parents'. Occasionally a child is placed between husband and wife, but more usually on the far side of the wife. An only or youngest child may sleep beside its parents until it is ten or eleven, but if a younger sibling is born it is placed to sleep either with an elder sibling or some older relation, often a widowed aunt or grandmother. A child usually sleeps in an elder person's arms till about the age of eight, after which, except in the very poorest familes, it usually gets its own bedding; but until marriage unmarried siblings of the same sex usually have their beds laid side by side. Children must always respect their grandparents' bedding, and in the day-time the place where it is laid; and adults must respect the bedding and sleeping-places of their parents-in-law.

Once the fire is damped down and the bedding laid out people are presumed to be invisible and inaudible; but this is merely a social convention, and people can and do tell in the greatest detail just what goes on in the night. Occasionally a young man may wait till everybody else is asleep, and then creep out on hands and knees

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for [461] the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asék*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [636]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 415 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

●513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

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289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised 351 level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) 794 which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *youmi*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers. 838

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass. 231 514 539

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again. 231

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
[753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

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351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

[514 = 361] 241

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty [556] of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) 123
or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised [152] me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a [515] different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you 431
go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *aséḱ* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the 431
Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving 123
more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard, and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
[292] similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

[788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
793] twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [713]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515] conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781] excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them'

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyous-faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782
796
river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice. [515]

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the 273
sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of 796
millet. The second is Dyö, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dön-dyö-chi-log, who [776]
is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is 773
of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset 273
the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was 796
brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 246.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 346 373 lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

779 On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the [778] 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the 346 Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the [212] Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no 352 chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) [516] sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged 792 in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

346 The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one 788 end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in 778 addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

778 The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying 516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the 791 789
slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain [834
away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor 784]
should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was 791
terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so- [516]
called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this [261]
gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, 789
Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[537] 195 large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison comes after'. *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly [198] employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after [517] work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

2: Morris T.-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517] roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning
sing-song voice.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.—Analyst]

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most of the over-tones, I never spoke it more than very haltingly. 124
Lepcha is a simple language structurally, but the labour of learning by heart several thousand vocables which it was impossible to connect with any language system I knew was a hard one. Fearing my working knowledge of the language might be inadequate I therefore took with me into Sikkim as an interpreter a young Lepcha named Sukra Singh who was being trained as a dispenser. His knowledge of English, though not profound, was adequate, and I was always able to check up on his not infrequent mistranslations. In the event, the presence of this interpreter proved very useful. The Lepchas have a tendency to monologue, for one 124
person to speak continuously while the rest listen. If I can so 521
express it, the Lepchas talk in paragraphs, and not in single sentences; they fall naturally into a long swinging rhythm, and much dislike being interrupted or held up in the middle of a narrative or anecdote. I found I could not possibly keep up my notes and a conversation at the same time; but the Lepchas found it an easy matter to make a long statement and then pause while the statement was repeated. Since none of the Lepchas of Lingthem had had 124
any but the most casual contact with Europeans—indeed most of the men and all the women had never seen one before—they had no set ideas of the way Europeans behave. They have however in their mythology and stories the tradition of nobles (into which group we naturally fell as being under the protection and recommendation of the Maharajah) being accompanied by servants, and doing all business through their intermediary. Without the use of an interpreter who, with his repetitions which I hardly listened to, would slow down the pace of a conversation sufficiently for me to take full notes, I could never have taken down the life-histories and elaborate ritual in anything like such full detail. When he was not present I had to ask people to wait, or to repeat themselves; the Lepchas disliked this, just as much as they disliked questions demanding a direct answer; they were quickly disconcerted and lost the thread of their narrative. Until I knew people well I asked as few questions as possible; as far as possible I checked and counter-checked every statement, but this was mostly done spontaneously by different Lepchas discussing identical subjects, or by their arguing among themselves. The most I would do with strangers was to suggest a subject for discussion; I only cross-examined those people with whom I had already a confidential relationship.

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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142
291

[301]

Pemba, the son of Datoop.

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[311]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[Facing p. 96]

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Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

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521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of [313] course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [781]
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's *Pi-bo* got up and made a short speech. While this was in progress general conversation ceased: but before it was finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [831]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed. By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms were now completely filled with people and the smoke was so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [521]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene, since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal was being prepared and would later be served to all the guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
Fields.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 842 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

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where he was going to pray: the table with the cup filled with strained *chi* and the incense burner already lit was in front of him; the Mandal was seated beside him, with his wives opposite; everything was ready for the ceremony to begin. Before praying the Mun made an, as it were, introductory speech, addressed partly to the Mandal, and partly to the other people present.

The Mun: I'm a very old man, and I found the journey very trying indeed; I was tired and felt I'd like to rest, and —— a girl. I'm really a very old man now; but since you're the Mandal, and this is your house I shall do what I can. When you first sent a messenger with a load of *chi* I said 'No, I cannot go'. But you sent twice and three times and I couldn't resist you. It is true that in rank as Mandal you are above me; but in age you could be my grandson. Just as a small girl is frightened when she sees a big penis and runs away, or as a little boy is frightened when he sees a big vulva, so am I frightened of you. Nevertheless I shall do what I can. I am very sorry for you because although you have had four wives you have got no son. I think this is a source of great worry to you, but what can be done? It is not your fault; you have treated your wives well. It is not a bad deed but misfortune which makes you childless. Were I to say I could do nothing for you, you would be disappointed; shall I do this ceremony and nothing result I shall be ashamed. Nevertheless I will do what I can. You—his wives—you are my sisters and daughters: tell me, my daughters, does this husband of yours treat you badly?

The Mandal: My parents-in-law are very strict with me, and were I to do so they would punish me.

Tafóor: And then you'd take it out of your wives—or put it in —very roughly. (*General laughter*)

The Mandal (while the Mun smears butter on the cup): When I was ill it was discovered that Sabdok *moong* was troubling me, and Hit *rum* was angry, so I sent for you, because you are an old and experienced man. So please be so kind as to sacrifice properly, so that I may be troubled no longer. Please do so, whether my body is cured thereby or not.

The Mun: Were you to die, what would happen to your wives and daughter—women who are all alone?

The Mandal: Don't worry about that; in that case they can go home.

The Mun: I have already said that I am old and weak; if my sacrifice is unsuccessful, don't blame me. I take all you here to

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522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

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would count as incestuous. Another reason is the cultural concept that there is no temperamental difference between men and women; except that men are usually stronger physically identical standards of behaviour are expected from both sexes; the standards of beauty are identical; except that they may not kill animals nor perform lamaist ceremonies nor own land women suffer under no disability because they are women. With this general conception of the similarity of the two sexes the differences of appearance and function of the primary sexual characteristics becomes even more striking and worthy of comment; and it is worth noting again in this context the extraordinary amount of fantasy about the independent life of the genitalia which occurs in the Lepcha stories. It is also possible that in removing all intense emotion from sexual activity the Lepchas have also destroyed some of the emotional release and psychological satisfaction.

Some of the young men were particularly given to obscenity, particularly Tobgé, a ne'er-do-well whose wife, it will be remembered, was carrying on with Dadool, and Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother. Chudo was twenty-nine, the father of three children, and very fond of his wife. He always gave the impression of being very much younger than his years; he was particularly sweet-tempered, even for a Lepcha, and very industrious, but he was extremely childish, perhaps because his elder brother, Tafoor, was so very learned and responsible. He had rather a grotesque sense of humour and was very fond of imitating lamaist dances, almost parodying them, and of making surprising jokes and unexpected little presents. When he learned I was fond of flowers he used to bring me nearly every day some orchid or other odd flower that he had found in his work travelling about the country-side. If the younger men were more inclined to obscenity so were the elder women, particularly Lumba's first wife, a Mun aged forty-seven, who was completely outrageous and shameless in her speech and behaviour; she was a jolly bawdy old creature, rather in the tradition of Marie Lloyd. As far as my information goes, and on such matters it is very extensive, she was relatively chaste in her private life; nobody repeated any scandal about her. When I talked to women about sex and childbirth and similar subjects the older ones used always to answer quite freely; but occasionally if there was a young woman in the group, she would ask why I talked about such things which made her feel ashamed; if this happened the older women would usually stop the conversation, giving

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831 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal
522 manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes,
834 though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at
522 about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed,
537 apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the
537 person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it.
195 Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is
864 another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are [839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, [522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

586 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary 522 *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shet*—a prayer for future children.

585 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young 533 women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the 535 ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Kurma spies on the birth of Apot.

X159 'When I was about six or seven I spied on a neighbour giving birth to a baby. I did this by standing under the house floor which was made of crossed bamboo; I did it by myself out of curiosity because I wanted to know what an adult woman's vulva looked like, and to see how babies were born. The woman was hanging on to a rope from the ceiling and an older woman squatted behind her and held her breasts; the woman's belt was loosened and from below I had a very good view of her vulva. The woman was groaning and at each groan the vulva rounded and the head of the child could be seen; between groans the vulva was oblong. Finally after a discharge of yellow fluid the baby was born suddenly; and then the after-birth.' (*I put some questions to Kurma about this event; he said he recollected no feelings of disgust or fear; on the contrary, the spectacle was probably exciting. He excuses his conduct by saying he was too young to know shame.*)

Early sexual experience.

X159 864 'When I was eight or nine I used to ask the little girls of the neighbourhood to let me see and touch their vulvas; to which they would consent and then lie down. Nobody told me about sex; I knew naturally as everybody does; it is like eating. At the same time I only knew how to do it properly when at the age of ten I saw my elder brother, aged fifteen, lift a girl's legs in the forest. [833] My first sexual experience was when I was twelve, with a girl of the same age. We were both employed watching animals. I had seen older people and they had urged me to try the girl; she agreed but after one attempt would have no more to do with me. Pulling back the prepuce hurt.'

Practical joke played on Kurma.

X159 522 'When I was about ten I was sent to live in a field hut to scare away monkeys and other animals from the ripening grain; with me was a young married man, a relation of Passo's. We had grain and pumpkins to eat. The young man played the following trick on me; he told me to get a big leaf from the forest, which I did; then the young man shat on it and told me to fold it up carefully and carry it right away down to the river; I must not put it near a house or in a field. I did as I was told. This happened for

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

three days; on the fourth day I said "It is only fair we should take it in turns; I will take yours to-day and you take mine to-morrow." On the morrow I brought a leaf and shat on it and told the other to take it away. He refused, whereupon I said "If you won't throw it away it will stay there." After some argument the other threw it away and did not play tricks on me again.' 159x 522

Relations with Mother.

'From time to time I used to go home and see Mother and help her and take her presents of the food and things I had saved at Passo's; they were rich, Mother was poor. Passo and his wife dressed me in second-hand clothes and gave me an old knife; they said I did not work well enough and cloth was too expensive to give me new clothes. 159x

'When I was with Passo I was treated very badly, I had to do all the chores and work and was given bad food and no *chi*[7] while they sat at ease and ate and drank all day. When I was eight I was so unhappy that I ran away to my Mother; but she beat me and sent me back to my adopting parents. I ran away again when I was fifteen; this time Mother kept me nine days and then sent me back with a present of a load of *chi*.'

Onset of Padem Rum.

'When I was ten I was sent by Passo together with Cherim and Sanam to my Mother's father to fetch buckwheat. I was meant to carry twenty measures but could only manage fifteen. The two elder men were given *chi* and rice but I was merely given buckwheat cake. On the way home the Padem attacked me; I could not see properly and felt as though my body were being poked with sticks; I kept on thinking of drinking *chi* and eating rice like my companions had. I managed to get home with the buckwheat. My adopting parents did not look any bigger than myself.' (*For three months he was ill with constant derangements of vision.*) 'A chilli looked as big as a melon, a pumpkin looked like an umbrella. At times I felt as though I was flying or sitting on trees, at times my body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs.

[7] Kurma used to get much more easily drunk than other Lepchas of his age, and I wonder whether this is due to the fact that he was not accustomed to *chi* in childhood. [273]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X 159 *Amputation of 'ingzong'.*

752 'At Lik I had an "*ingzong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

X 159 When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife
839 of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur
[522] attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[158] [15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was
755 given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*[1] which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from [778] time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer [E2a] sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

[1] [i.e., dough cones.—Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded. [313]

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The bride's *Pi-bo* stands with a ceremonial scarf in one 585
hand and a rupee in the other, and addresses her as follows:

"You have now married into the X clan: now you are bound to its members; and if you have any lovers now is the time to drop them, for in future you should have no such connections outside your new family. In the beginning of all things Tarbong and Komsi originated marriage, and carried out the ceremony as we are doing it to-day. Now are you bound."

As he says these words he places the scarf round the bride's neck and puts the rupee into her joined hands and sits down again. The Mandal now asks the girl the names of her family gods and demons, and what sacrifices should be made to them, although these are, of course, already known to all concerned. Should she remain silent, or reply that she has none, some old man of the bridegroom's village will say to her: "You must not tell lies: we know perfectly well that you must have at least one personal god and demon; so speak up and tell us their names. Moreover, if later on you have any children and they get ill the Mun will certainly be able to find out who their supernaturals are, so you might just as well tell us the names now and be done with it."

If the girl still remains silent her *Aku* or *Ajyong* will reply for her, after which she is formally handed over to the bridegroom, the necessary conversation being carried out by means of somewhat obscene periphrases, of which the following are typical examples:

"Now we hand this egg (i.e. the bride) over to you, so look 585
after it carefully." It sometimes happens that the bride is 522
older than the boy, in which case a suitable reply to the above remark would be: "Very many thanks for the gift: but the egg does not look exactly new-laid."

If the girl is of such an age that it is likely that she has had many lovers someone will probably remark: "She certainly looks a little shop-soiled; and I imagine that her pubic hair is as long as Sor Mung's tresses." To this the correct reply is: "Well, you see, the fact is we have carefully shelled the eggs so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 that it will be all the easier to eat." But to this the retort is:
522 "Yes: quite so. But it is obvious that the egg has not been freshly shelled."

This sort of banter is continued until neither party can think of anything fresh to say. All the time it is going on the bride hangs her head demurely and covers her face with her hands in order to hide her blushes (if any): but since most of the assembled company are by this time distinctly drink-taken, to say the least of it, nobody takes any offence and the whole ceremony is conducted with the utmost good nature.

585 After this a special dish called *Hik zo-kup* is served to the bridal party and the assembled Lamas, should any be present. It consists of eight fowls cooked with rice. In the portion given to the bride there should be one leg which has been cooked complete, with the claws still on. Following this *Mon zo-kup*, which consists of pork and rice, is served: like the previous dish it too is not offered to the general company. While this is going on the presents brought by the bride (the pig's carcass, etc.) are brought in and put down in front of the altar. Now two old men of the bridegroom's village stand up and offer the *Nyom Kyomo*, as the present is called, to the gods. They turn towards the altar and tell the gods that the present has been brought by such-and-such a girl, who has come to live in the house from this time onwards. They then offer the gift in the same manner to the Lamas, who signify their assent by nodding their heads. The *Nyom Kyom* is then taken up and put away in the next room.

A general meal of meat, rice, vegetables, and so on is now served to everybody, including the bride and bridegroom, who both eat out of the same plate on this occasion. By the time it is finished it will probably be already dark, but nobody thinks of going home. Some of the guests continue drinking throughout the night; others fall asleep where they sit. Every square inch of the floor is occupied and the atmosphere is like nothing so much as a London fog: nobody minds.

Early the following morning everyone is roused with *chi*, a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779]
book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781]
at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358]
Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind [522] were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

[832 522] One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes : "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex ;
it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour ; it is regarded as almost as essential as food.
Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost
impersonal ; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal
relationships passionately adhered to between sexual part-
ners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts
114 and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
562 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 158 sq.

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751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431 by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

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than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

832 426 562

viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix I, 593 ~~to which~~ the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analysis]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for [461] the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asik*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

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MONASTERY FEAST

[facing p. 256]

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527 with boiling water for *chi* or tea, one with cereal and one with meat, if there is meat. Overlooking these pots to the east of the monastery will be old Dunbi, who has got a sort of honorary post as monastery cook; he does not do very much and the position is more or less of a sinecure invented to give this lazy and incompetent man a feeling of importance and to provide food, which will be given as payment for his services, for his wife and children. Usually the wives of the givers of the feast supervise the cooking, giving out the materials and so on; but everybody lends a hand as he feels disposed. Sitting about on the grass and stones outside are a number of the younger men and women and elder boys; they chat and joke and pass indecent remarks and occasionally lend a hand at fetching firewood or water, or bamboos to be cut up into *patyoot*. The younger boys from about the age of eight to fourteen hang about with these elders when they are not doing chores for their parents or the feast-givers; they mostly sit fairly quietly, but occasionally they go on to the hill outside the monastery precincts and run about playing catch with flowers of daphne or chasing the hens or imitating bird calls. They are used as messengers a great deal if the parents have left anything behind; they are in the feast but are on the fringe of it. The girls are more inclined to tag along with their parents, or with an elder sister; many of them are carrying younger siblings, though they often hand over these burdens to their brothers. Almost all the time everybody is eating and drinking.

The lamas and possibly the feast-givers arrive the evening before; the lamas to make the decorations for the altar and the feast-givers to stack the provisions in the porch. Most of the night and almost continuously from dawn the lamas have been reading their books and playing their musical instruments; from the moment they arrive they start drinking *chi* and eating and the *patyoot* in front of them are continually filled. The crowd starts arriving in driblets at about eight o'clock, each person bringing some contribution to the feast; some people arrive later and the full concourse will not be present till nearly midday. Some of the more pious people on their arrival circumambulate the monastery three times, always keeping the wall on the right, and turn the prayer wheels; they may go into the monastery room and prostrate themselves three times before the images. As soon as they are settled each person is provided with a *patyoot* of *chi* which they take and sit down and drink; a small *patyoot* with several 'straws' in it will be provided for the toddlers of three or four, and set firmly on

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273 cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862] hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink 262 on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302] intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273] usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
fields.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 842 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with [289] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either [361] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and [161] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the 527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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855 education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status
858 approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

857 Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging
[15] grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a
531] great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

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Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
874 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 531 874 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 792 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 622 775 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, [766] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper
[531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other
[578] person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced 751
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of 777
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [53] of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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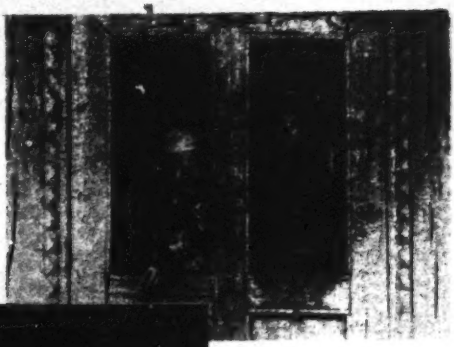
Happy family.



[285]

Lepcha girl.

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Tafoor's two daughters.

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Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Karma.

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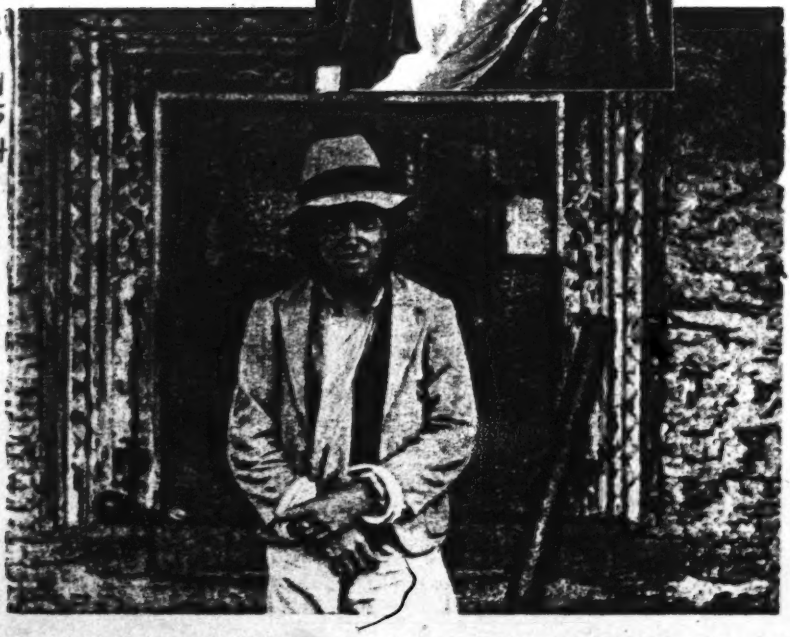

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

532 detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

778 All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are 532 made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives 412 are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge [439] and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils Soo-*moong* (enmity of speech), Gé-*moong* (enmity of thought) and Thor-*moong* (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity Soo-gé-thor is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead. 796 578

First of all a very large image of the supernatural Thorgyop *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of Soo-gé-thor and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block[7] on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan 'we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man'. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs. 796 [532]

Another image is made of Soo-gé-thor, this time recumbent and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures. [532]

Finally a third image called Sor-so-mu is made; this is a three-sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to [532]

[7] A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year 'animal' cycle.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[534]

THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamoo *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nahleut* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chaṭé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[532]

CHANO CONSULTS TAFOOR ABOUT HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS

Above: Tafoor casts a horoscope in the monastery porch.

Below: The devils to be exorcised. Deut *moong*, Mamoo *moong*, Lho *moong*. They are about 25 cms. high, made out of coloured buckwheat powder on stands of banana stem.

[facing p. 472]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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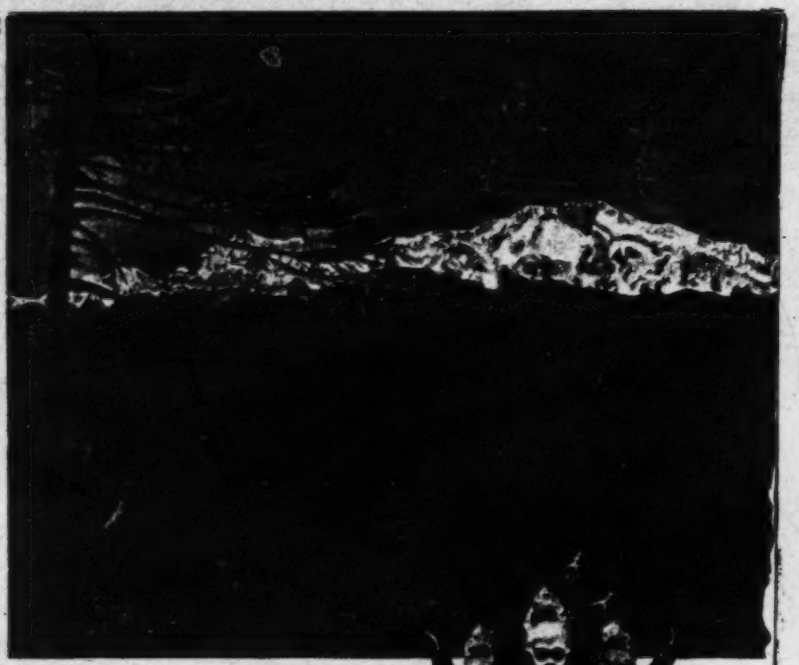

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Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number. It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen, which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks' feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep, was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to 175
have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin 532
mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost 175
bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured 778
in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons. These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy 778
worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure 842
for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

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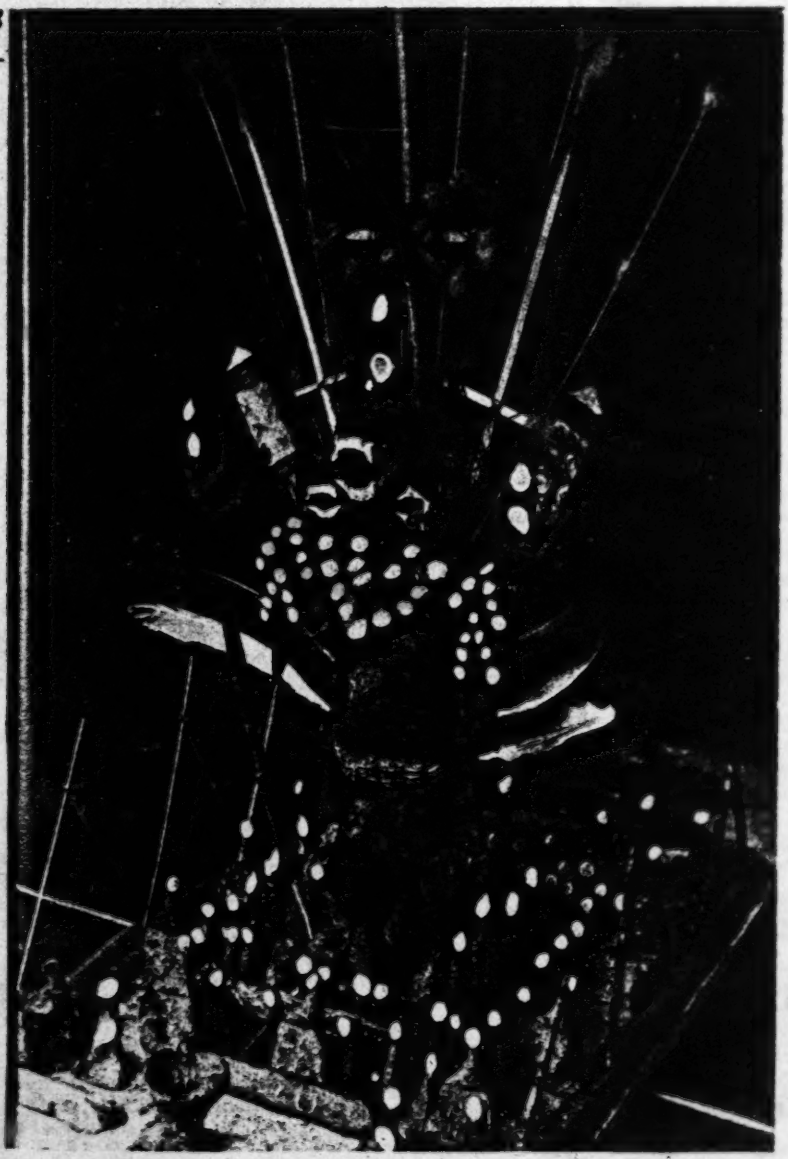

A completed *Ge-sum*.

[Facing p. 130]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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532

Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 275]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies—or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafèt* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafèt* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafèt* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafèt*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two
522 parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shet*—a prayer for future children.

585 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young
● 533 women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the
535 ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 the song beginning, 'Father, help me! Mother, help me!' The dancing is completely unorganised, and merely consists of indi-
533 viduals hopping or stamping more or less rhythmically as they feel
535 disposed. Unlimited food and drink are provided, and it is considered desirable and almost inevitable that everybody should get as drunk as possible. There is a strong sexual overtone to the atmosphere and towards evening many couples separate and go off into the forest for a short spell; they mostly return to the house where the feast is being held before night has completely fallen.

585 At the only marriage feast that I witnessed—that of Ongden with his second wife—I noted 'About seven o'clock the noise was exactly like a very crowded English pub at closing time: the atmosphere was unbelievable. Nearly a hundred very dirty people in two small rooms which had been shut up as much as possible with the balconies closed by wooden partitions and so on; there was a huge fire of wet wood smoking hard so that one could only just see across the room. In the kitchen some people were sleeping round the fire while others were still cooking; at one side there was a very bloody mess where sausages were being made from the entrails by three young men; others were asleep in the muck. In the *dé-ong* the ground was so crowded with sitters and sleepers that there was only just room for the female relations of the husband to circulate with their wooden ladles of boiling water with which they constantly replenished the bowls of *chi*; they appeared to be the only relatively sober people present. The bride and her party sat as if they had never moved, in their long line against the wall of the *dé-ong*; the groom wandered about rather disconsolately, talking very little to anyone. Old Adér, who had previously pulled up his dress and exposed himself during the sacrifice, started singing in a minor key dragging over the syllables; whereupon Lumba's *jethi* (that is his first wife), who is renowned as a singer, got up and asked for some meat to be given her as a fee for the song she was going to sing; she was given some and started singing, but nobody took much notice though everybody said "hush"; the singers walked about as if they were cabaret artists. The pace of the evening got slower and slower and sleepier and sleepier; the children sat about or slept. It would have been very rude for anybody to go home before sunrise the next day.'

585 This marriage of Ongden with a widow was slightly irregular
587 and abbreviated, first because it was for both parties a second marriage, and secondly because the bride had been living with her

2: Morris T.-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517] roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning
sing-song voice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked. 796 781

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell. 796 [533 781]

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain. [787]

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be 796 571

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781 888 857] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong 533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

796 [293 533]

DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at
533 intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight
789 the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the
778 day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

[533
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352]

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[FACING p. 274]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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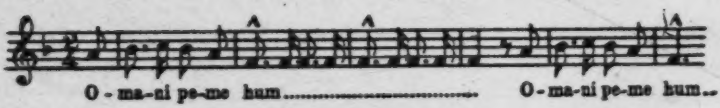

ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*
721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against [152]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.-Analyst]

192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riāk-bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha
192 book, the *Tashi sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a
114 Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

●533 The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve
192 many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the
101 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi*' *Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is
192 the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*Sa-mó-lep*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*y'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-teb*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 275.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [778] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama- [777] temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth- 756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

●533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by carving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yak* or *Yak-mow* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tyul-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

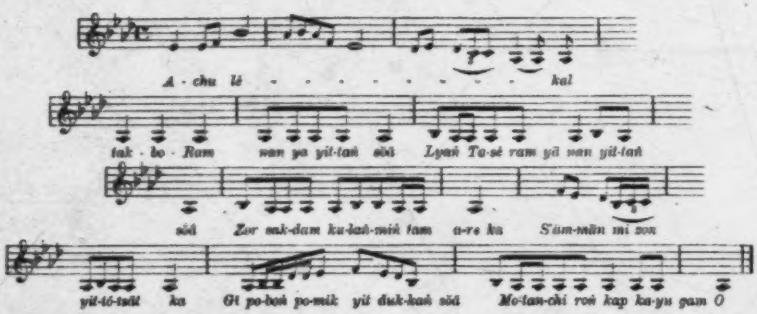
533 kindness of my wife who took it down in European notation. The first of these songs, *A-chu-lé*, shows traces of the very old pentatonic scale, says Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, to whom I showed it, and he adds in regard to this scale 'though it is observable in the Scotch ballads, it is the scale (still) in use amongst the Chinese, Japanese and Siamese'.

533 539 In the first song it will be noticed that the first verse has more even measure than any of the others and is evidently the oldest and purest. In the second, the resemblance between the primordial grand mother and Eve is very striking. The third and last verses, with their numerous Tibetan words and references to Buddhist symbolism, are decidedly modern, though many of their words have retained their *Tań-bor* expressions.

I.

A-chu-lé!

O JOY!



539

A-chu-lé!
Kāl [1]) *Tak-bo Ram wan yā yit-tań sōū*
Lyań Ta-se Ram yā wan yit-tań sōū
Zor ań-dam ku-łań-mań tām ā-re-kā

S'ām-mān-mi son yit tó-tań ka
Gi po-boń po-mik yit duk kań sōū

Mtanchi Roń kap ka-yu gam o.

A-chu-lé!
Tar-a'i-a'am Nam-byań kań yit ao
Łań-bi-łań yit war-ka-bā uń yit ao-ó-re
Ňu-yit sob-ó-re ta-łyań fo yit ran-o

O Joy!
The *kāl* Head-Father-Spirit in the olden time
Made the earth. (He) The Sky-Existing One
Made in this tearful [2]) world the fields to cover the (bosom of the stones.
When the *Sham-man-mi* men were made
And the *gi* jointed Bamboos and trees, at that same (time were we
The sons of the (one-) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs.

O Joy!
The *far-shi-sham* mulberry [3]) trees were made,
The rice, the vegetables were made,
The running rivers with the *ao-o-re* fishes were made

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[1]) This has been suggested to me as meaning „dark", that is to say „mysterious", and thus implying that it has been borrrowed from the Indian *Kāla*; but it seems to me to be a pure Lepcha word.
[2]) Also „rainy" (*zor*).
[3]) „Nambyong" is *Morus serrata*. The fruit also of „Nambong" (*Adina cordifolia*) is eaten.

539 Ea Ye!

Mo-tan-chi Roń kap ńun non bāu	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lā-non po-bong yit duk kań sa	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsam* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsam po-mig duk kań sa po-s'or boń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Y'it duk kang sa Roń kap gam yoń s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

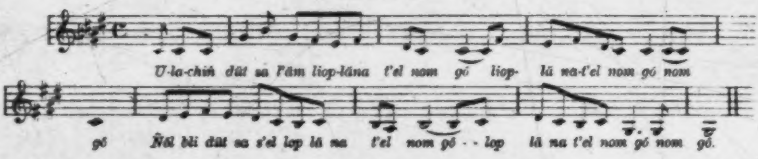
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the
[574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing
[273] behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUŃ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duk dūt sa-l'ām liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ńū-bli dūt sa-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Soń la lpen s'u fań-ruń „ „ „ „	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer ki-vun nań nāń liop-lā diń mit nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tań-kat sa-s'el „ „ „ „ „	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tań-gum diń-mit nom „ „ „ „ „	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bāl-la liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mak fo s'ot nań nāń „ „ „ „	Like a sorrowing *S'uń* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loń la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ne tak-mok buk go ma l'ān na-yuń	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-che-ne* yam [7])
Kyoń-rāu-le lat duk ā-tim-bu lāt non-ad	I feel great pain in my *kyoń-rāu-le* heart.

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[824] [1]) *Po-shor* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo
[231] from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poe*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.
[415] [2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine crecana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poā-l'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poā-hia*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *hip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „*Sister*".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ńoi-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *lan-s'u*.

[222] [7]) *Tak-mok-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

wall on their right side (as must be done for all lamaist holy places or objects) turning the prayer wheels as they come up to them. 346 778

The chief holy place is a large bare room, occupying almost the whole of the ground floor of the building. The interior of the room is empty except for four supporting pillars in the middle of the floor, and two slightly raised seats running in parallel lines from the altar to the door on which the lamas sit during ceremonies. In the centre of the back wall is the altar, inset in a carved wooden frame; on it are three large images, Sangyi Youbami in the centre, flanked by Gamyang Kanché Rimbuché and Chérézi; in front of these larger images are four smaller gods. On either side of the altar are worked wooden pigeon-holes, in which are kept the hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyour, one of the two Tibetan scriptures. These volumes consist of loose leaves bound up in a cloth and fastened between two plain pieces of wood as bindings. Scattered about the room are the various musical instruments which are not in use—drums, gongs and cymbals; the metal instruments similar to trumpets and clarionets, the conch shells and the flutes made out of a human femur are kept either on or before the altar. Every morning at dawn a *kané* (sacristan) places on the altar before the images seven bowls of water for the gods to drink and wash in; every evening at sunset these bowls are emptied and replaced by *chimi*—altar lights, consisting of a small metal container with a wick of bamboo or cloth, filled with melted butter or oil. There also stands on the altar a copper jug containing blessed water (*tyū*) and usually a pair of vases filled with flowers. There are also occasional offerings of cones of ground grain. During important festivals the front of the altar is completely hidden by elaborate constructions, chiefly made out of dough and butter which represent those gods who are being specially worshipped. Anybody approaching this or any other lamaist altar for the first time is meant to prostrate himself three times, standing with joined hands, falling to the knees and then touching the ground with the forehead. After these prostrations no special attention is paid to the altar, and it is quite permissible to turn one's back on it. [779] [534]

To the west of the main room, with a separate entrance also on the north wall, is the *lha-gong*. This is a high and narrow chamber almost entirely filled with four huge prayer wheels, reaching up to the ceiling; indeed the first and biggest of the wheels, which is called Betsa Guru, pierces the ceiling and its top, a cone

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

grade to another demands firstly increasing knowledge and secondly validating feasts—*chaptok klon*. There must be an interval of at least three years between each rise in grade. It is expected that the expenses of the first two validating feasts will be borne by the young lama's family, the subsequent ones by himself. In the validating feasts for the higher grades everybody in the neighbourhood has to make fixed contributions. All the feasts are accompanied by prayers and readings from the scriptures. 793

The grade above *chapti-bu* is *tongpeun-bu*. These are the players of the musical instruments—the conch shells, the *galing* (a metal instrument between a clarionet and a trumpet), the long telescopic trumpet (*pak-doong*) and the flute made from a human femur (*kong-ling*). People learn how to play these instruments by watching experts; for the *galing* which has a reed mouthpiece and is capable of a variety of notes, the learner holds a grass between his teeth and copies the fingering of the player; he may also be privately taught by friends. To my Occidental ears all the music sounded like the cacophony of a zoo in a thunderstorm, but the lamas recognise and teach tunes, or, as they say, 'numbers.' The validating feast which demands a pig, two maunds of grain and four pounds of oil, only lasts one day. *Tongpeun-bu* cannot perform any offices on their own, and practically occupy the position of choristers. [534]

Next in grade comes the *kané* whose one day feast calls for an ox, three maunds of grain and a maund of *chi*. The chief business of the *kané* is looking after the monastery and assisting the Dorjé Lapoon in their ceremonies; he also plays musical instruments. The *kané* are the only people who have to visit the monastery daily, to place the bowls of water on the altars at dawn, the *chimi* at sunset, and to burn incense. In the absence of superiors the *kané* is permitted to perform all offices of which he is capable; usually however his knowledge is slight and he has to ask his superiors for help; this help must be paid for with *chi*. The *kané* roughly corresponds to a deacon.

Kané and the ranks below barely qualify as lamas; they are in a way still students. Between the *kané* and the next grade *chéné* there is a very great gap. A *chéné* can perform all offices and in the absence of superiors can overlook monastery ceremonies; if he is old and experienced enough he can take pupils. The *chéné* is really a qualified priest. His validating feast is the most expensive of all: he has to give an ox, a pig, six maunds of grain, and ten maunds of *chi*. Each household has to contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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LAMAS PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MONASTERY COURTYARD

Above : The son of Lharibu Chujen and Tafoor play 'clarionets'.
Below : Kutt'r, Lumba's son, and Chudo play telescopic trumpets.

[facing p. 208]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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756
796

[534]

THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamco *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nahleut* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chaçé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ɣo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191 Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these 797] were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534] earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pōn-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pōn-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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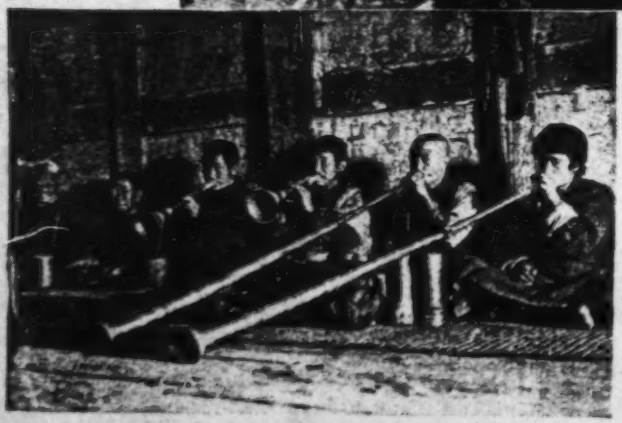
Lamaist music.

Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.

[Facing p. 76]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix I, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analyse]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 777 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 787 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 373 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against [752]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [B7]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.-Analyst]

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

●534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war servic

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norki
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and lowest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lépchas have no images nor [177] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone. Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the [324] primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nîgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 480. The term *Yak* or *Yak-man* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yati*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipal-bo*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[753 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

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nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

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In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 294 a.b.

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before the ceremony the musicians will continue playing at intervals all night, but the laymen do not start arriving till the next morning. In the morning all those who have been invited by the givers of the feast, which, except in the case of very poor people or very unpopular ones, means practically the whole village, start arriving at the monastery, each bringing with them some contribution in the form of food or *chi*, which will be of assistance to the giver of the feast. During the whole day the lamas sit in their seats in two parallel rows from the altar to the door, except when they go out for a slight rest and change of air. Their food and drink is brought to them at their seats in the monastery and they have permanently a *patyoot* of *chi* in front of them. The worship consists of special readings and chantings from the sacred scriptures interspersed with music.

Owing to the fact that the feasts in honour of Kinchenjunga are given by laymen certain precautions are taken and certain opportunities are given for acquiring merit which are not considered necessary for the feasts given by lamas. The precautions consist of the offering of *cherkem*—grain floating in *chi*—which is thrown out to the devils by a layman with cries of *Lo chi-do*—'take this'—and the burning of a bonfire of aromatic herbs and leaves to gratify the supernaturals. The lay-giver may, if he wishes, acquire merit by performing the ceremonial dance called *da-floh* before the altar, prancing and chanting in front of a folded cloth on the top of which his hat is laid, with the knife to the right and the scabbard to the left. In the evening the altar-piece is perambulated three times round the monastery and is then broken up; the dough is eaten (lamas however may not eat it) and the butter smeared on the heads of those standing round; this butter is regarded as a sort of sacrament which conveys blessings on those whose head is smeared with it. The Dorjé Lapoon in person anoints the heads of the lay-givers of the feasts and their families. Although this ends the religious part of the ceremony, gossiping and drinking may continue all night if sufficient *chi* has been provided.

Calendrical festivals take place frequently, at relatively fixed dates throughout the year. The greater number are apotropaic, intended to ward away those evils inherent in the season: illness in the winter and summer, hail and predatory animals when the crops are growing, quarrelling when the harvests are gathered, misfortunes in the new year, and so on. These ceremonies vary very considerably in elaboration. Some, such as the ceremony to

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585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two
522 parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shet*—a prayer for future children.

585 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to
533 feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the
535 ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

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585 the song beginning, 'Father, help me! Mother, help me!' The dancing is completely unorganised, and merely consists of indi-
533 viduals hopping or stamping more or less rhythmically as they feel
535 disposed. Unlimited food and drink are provided, and it is considered desirable and almost inevitable that everybody should get as drunk as possible. There is a strong sexual overtone to the atmosphere and towards evening many couples separate and go off into the forest for a short spell; they mostly return to the house where the feast is being held before night has completely fallen.

585 At the only marriage feast that I witnessed—that of Ongden with his second wife—I noted 'About seven o'clock the noise was exactly like a very crowded English pub at closing time: the atmosphere was unbelievable. Nearly a hundred very dirty people in two small rooms which had been shut up as much as possible with the balconies closed by wooden partitions and so on; there was a huge fire of wet wood smoking hard so that one could only just see across the room. In the kitchen some people were sleeping round the fire while others were still cooking; at one side there was a very bloody mess where sausages were being made from the entrails by three young men; others were asleep in the muck. In the *dé-ong* the ground was so crowded with sitters and sleepers that there was only just room for the female relations of the husband to circulate with their wooden ladles of boiling water with which they constantly replenished the bowls of *chi*; they appeared to be the only relatively sober people present. The bride and her party sat as if they had never moved, in their long line against the wall of the *dé-ong*; the groom wandered about rather disconsolately, talking very little to anyone. Old Adér, who had previously pulled up his dress and exposed himself during the sacrifice, started singing in a minor key dragging over the syllables; whereupon Lumba's *jethi* (that is his first wife), who is renowned as a singer, got up and asked for some meat to be given her as a fee for the song she was going to sing; she was given some and started singing, but nobody took much notice though everybody said "hush"; the singers walked about as if they were cabaret artists. The pace of the evening got slower and slower and sleepier and sleepier; the children sat about or slept. It would have been very rude for anybody to go home before sunrise the next day.'

585 This marriage of Ongden with a widow was slightly irregular
587 and abbreviated, first because it was for both parties a second marriage, and secondly because the bride had been living with her

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When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but [788] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of [535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

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ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*
721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga,* meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
[813] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

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535 721 This dance differs from all others of the sort I have seen in that the performers, except for the figures of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, are not masked. It consists of an almost continuous slow circling round and round, with a great deal of sword-brandishing; more like the sort of thing one sees at a military tournament, except that the performers are all dressed in elaborate costumes of Chinese silks of various bright and highly contrasting colours.

The warriors formed up in two long lines as each of the two gods made its first entry from behind the dark brown curtains which covered the front of the monastery, after which the slow circling was again resumed. Both Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala did a rather dull *pas seul*, which went on much too long; it, too, consisted of the same slow circling, without any variation in the step. After a time each god gradually danced nearer and nearer the monastery entrance and finally disappeared within. The whole performance appeared to be without either beginning or end, and there seemed to be no reason why it should have ever finished. It was an attractive spectacle for the first twenty minutes or so, perhaps because of the brightly-coloured dresses, after which it quickly became intensely boring owing to the entire lack of variety. The music was provided by drums, cymbals, and clarionets and consisted of the *O mani peme hum* tune which we got to know so well in Lingtem, with the addition of indiscriminate undertones played on the long ten-foot monastery trumpets. I think the tune is more pleasing, however, when sung unaccompanied, as it always was by the Inebus in Lingtem.

The dance ended with the circumambulation of the monastery by all the performers, including the two horses which are dedicated to the service of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, and never ridden from the day they are born. They were plumed and draped in thick Chinese brocades and looked most impressive; but considerable efforts on the part of their grooms were necessary before they could be persuaded to take their part in the formal procession.

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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking
[787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of
775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should
[782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a
[797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited
[535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first
[778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet
782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535] ●
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hō."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793
nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 797]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

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831 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal
522 manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes,
522 though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed,
537 apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the
537 person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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[537] 195 large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison come after'. *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly [198] employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The [517] favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

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537

weeding, one person will tell (usually short) stories while the others work; sometimes there is one person appointed as story-teller for the day; that person will get special tit-bits at the evening meal. Only short stories are told at feasts, because there is too much noise and distraction for the necessary prolonged attention. Stories are also told on completely unformalised occasions; the sight of an uncommon bird or insect usually calls forth from somebody the story connected with this animal.

Lepcha stories are characterised by their vividness and by the number of internal repetitions. The Lepchas visualise extremely precisely and concretely; there are no half-tones in their stories; a thing or a person either is or is not present, and no attempt is made to fill the gap with guesses or conjectures. Although their stories are told extremely vividly, there is little tendency towards dramatisation for its own sake; changing of voice and mimicry of characters only occur in the humorous tales. Apart from the two sacred Mun stories there is no insistence on verbatim accuracy, provided all the points of the story are remembered.

Most of the older people have one or two long stories which are, as it were, their speciality; but there is no feeling of ownership in them and if another person can remember them he is at liberty to tell them. It is considered that to be able to recount a long story accurately it is necessary to listen to it attentively three times. Except for one or two of the animal fables the stories are never told to children; when they begin to learn sense and can sit quietly —that is when they are about ten—they are allowed to listen provided they don't interrupt. Some of the young boys know one or two short stories, and were very pleased to tell them to me, as unmarried youths do not easily get an audience.

It is not considered permissible to invent new fables or *lung-then* as they have a semi-scriptural value; the most that is allowed is a little individual embroidery or emphasis. Indeed I question whether stories are ever consciously invented; new ones are added to the repertoire through guests or visiting strangers.

Besides stories Lepchas are very fond of recounting anecdotes and events of their own past life or of their neighbours'; some of these anecdotes, such as the ordeal of the poisoners at Lungdeum[4] are half-way towards turning into stories, since they are told by people who were not themselves present. These anecdotes are told extremely precisely and concretely; when Lepchas describe

[4] See Book Three, Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

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622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as
622 uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has
584 arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid
●538 one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[43] manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between
177] the two parties.

This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

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622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He [538] is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater importance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture; [183] for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with 781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin.* There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin.* Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapõn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

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614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced
835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is
[538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem-
[195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual
[831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand
[833] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are
831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

● 538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

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756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, 841 for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; 539 it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*ṇyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingṛong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an [536] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the Rong was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said, 'You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing, gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game, and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull was asleep; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds. The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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the hazards of inheritance account sufficiently for the meaningless grouping of neighbours.

The names of the villages on either side of the river Talung are accounted for by the following oft-repeated etymological myth:

'On any clear day there is visible from Lingthem a large gendarme of black rock rising from the mountain Siniolchi, or, as it is called in Lepcha, Sanyol-koong. On that gendarme there lived once upon a time a devil called Lassoo-fo *moong* (the Lassoo bird devil). This devil was a man-eater; he used to capture people all through the neighbourhood and take them away to Tibet where he would kill and eat them. Therefore the Gods Kansi *thing* (lord), Kom-yo *thing* and Saktsum *thing* consulted together as to how they could kill this demon. They tried to find a man who was capable, but they could not do so. They then went to the caterpillar *pi-sik-bu* who gnaws trees so that they become hollow and fall down, and they told him to go and cut down the tree in that place.[3] The caterpillar agreed and hollowed the tree so that it fell down, after which the demon had no place to live and went wandering about. Then the three gods sent for Rum-nam (a mythological hero) to kill the demon, and wherever the demon went Rum-nam followed.

'The demon went down the Talung valley and came to Sakyong (so called because Tag-kyong-ka was killed there), Pantoong, Thong-to, Lavén, Tangvoong, Lungdeum (where he killed children), A-dong, Ling-them (*tem-la tem-la taa*: he ate each in turn): the village opposite is called Liklyang, the place of crying, because people cried out from there.[4] Rum-nam chased him and eventually overtook him at Lasso-tsong-nyong, in the Teesta valley to the west, and there killed him and scattered his flesh over the land. From this scattered flesh arose leeches and mosquitoes, and the small predatory bird *kar-hu-fo*. His bones turned into stone, and at the place where he was slain there is a huge stone which can be seen to this day.'

Except for questions of the size of the population and the fertility of the land and some minor details of internal administration,

[3] There is a verbal confusion here between the various meanings of the word *koong*—(1) mountain peak, and (2) tree, worked wood, and finally house-pillar. There are obviously no trees on the gendarme which is well above the snow level. However I heard this story repeated several times in identical terms.

[4] All the other village names have etymological derivations from the same legend, but it seems unnecessary to give them all.

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621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far 184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this 539 bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

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556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a ● 539 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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he tips of the *shang-no* tree, but of that tree only." The daughter vent and gathered the twigs and put them into her mother's lap. Then the mother said "If I can cover the sun with these twigs I an go all over the world. Watch what I do." Then she went out n to the verandah and threw up the twigs, so that the sun was overed and she would be able to go all over the world. Then he returned to the house and said to her daughter "You had better o soon, for your maternal uncles will be coming to look for my ody. They will take away three bags of jewels and only leave ou three tiny necklaces; but wear those and look after them. They will take all the cattle and only leave you one baby calf; ook after that. Do not be sad, for in seven days a man will come nd marry you, and your children will be *Jem-mi* (that is Mandal) f this place. Now go away." The daughter did as she was told.

'When morning broke the brothers came to fetch the corpse, ut they could see nothing; only there was a trail of blood leading o a lake situated above a big tree, and behind that a cliff with a loor in it. The mother entered that cliff and there she *munthen* performed the religious contemplation of the Mun) for seven ays.

'Meanwhile the brothers had divided the property just as had een prophesied; and the girl stayed with her calf and her three mall necklaces in the shed; and in seven days a hunter arrived nd lived with her and married her. This hunter was named Tsel-elim, and from him the Tsel-telim *ptso* sprang.[4]

'For seven days the mother *munthen* and at last she summoned he devils from their home; she vowed vengeance on all who had reat wealth or many children and she sent out the devils. These evils are called Ginoo *moong pan-di* ('Queen devil Ginoo') after he name of the murderers, and Lingthem *anyou* ('Lady Lingthem') fter the place of the murder.

'Within one year all the huge family had died and the door of heir house was closed. Lower down in the valley was another amily which had ten married sons and ten married daughters. These too Ginoo *moong* attacked and killed, all except two women alled Safi and Sakyon who were weeding the distant fields. But s they were weeding they heard a voice saying "I want Safi." 'I want Sakyon." The next morning when they woke up in the ield house they both had elephantiasis and quickly died.

[4] See Chapter Five, p. 127. Serving is the last survivor of this *ptso* in the eighbourhood.

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773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[42] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
124 their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *youmi*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers.

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass.

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again.

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today.

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein.

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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773 married, and as a consequence all their children were devils and
539 snakes and lizards. As soon as they were born their mother cast them aside without giving them milk. Finally she produced a normal child called Rilbu Shingbu whom she nursed; but when the devils saw this child getting the milk that had been denied them they were jealous and they took counsel and killed the child. Their incest was betrayed by the dog who guarded the door. When the parents were shamed and the child killed they buried the child in the black rock on the right of the Talung valley, which can be seen to this day, and thereafter in disgust they divided their property and separated. Komsi*thing* went to Tibet and he took with him all the riches and jewels and animals which the Tibetans have till this day. Narzong-*nyou* turned towards our country but she was careless and that is why our country is so poor.

'After that Komsi*thing* summoned all the devils to him and all came except Doam *moong* who is the devil of leprosy, and he counselled the devils and said to them "You are devils and you must act according to your nature; but you must take an oath that when men are born you will accept them if they give you pigs and oxen and rice and other things to eat; if you are looked after you must go away, you must obey the Mun and Padem and the sacrificer". They all took this oath except Doam *moong* who was not present and that is the reason why you can never drive him away and leprosy cannot be cured.

'But still there was no Mun; Itpomu had placed all the devils in the big plain Azum Patham; but there they had nothing to eat. So then Itpomu created the Mun spirit and sent her to feed them. When the Mun arrived at Azum Patham she said to the devils "You are older than I am and I am helpless; I will return to Itpomu". But the devils begged her to stay, saying that if she went away they would always be hungry; if she stayed they would promise to obey her. They swore this by three great oaths; first they cut their finger nails and swore on them: then they spat on the Kashou tree and the tree withered, finally they spat in the sea and the sea dried up. Since that time the Mun must find out what sacrifices are needed and give them to the devils and the devils will always obey them.'

773 The other important story for which *loong* has to be obtained
539 before it can be publicly repeated is the story of the *Origin of*
581 *Marriage*. With its internal repetitions and lists of names it takes between two and three hours to repeat; it is always repeated

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773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat 539 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two 581 points to which I should like to draw attention. Tárbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for [881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities 776 Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

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756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . . ' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, 841 for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; 539 it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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APPENDIX IV

THE SACRED STORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

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(This is one of the two Lepcha stories which can only be recited by those people who have obtained the ceremonial qualification or *loong*. The other story is the long Mun genesis (see Chapter Eight, p. 223) of which the greater part consists of a long catalogue of names.

The sacred story of the origin of marriage has to be repeated in its entirety by the officiant at each marriage. It takes between two and three hours to rehearse, owing to the innumerable internal repetitions and culminations which I have indicated in brackets. Nearly every paragraph is repeated twice, and some many times more.)

When Itpomu had completed creation there were no husbands and wives. The last person she bore was a son called Tarbong-bo whom she nursed. When the child grew big enough to work he told his mother that he would like to travel and see the world. His mother said "No, you are too young" but he insisted, and so she cooked some rice for him and put it into his knapsack. So the next morning he travelled by the road called Parhi Pageun and came to the top of Paki Chu; from there he went down to Palyang Chu, which is a mountain above Sakhyong and can be seen on a clear day. From there he saw the *palit samper koong* tree covered with fruits, and *pedong*, *taryong athyak kanyoong* and many other birds eating the fruit. When he saw that he sat down and ate his rice; then he returned home in the evening and climbed on to his mother's lap and sucked her milk. His mother then asked "What did you see?" He told her what he had seen (*verbal repetition*). Then his mother said "If you are my son you must go and get *yongming yongsong* (which is a kind of bamboo) and the thread *komok ki* (to make traps)." That night he slept at home and the next day he went and got what his mother had said, cutting down the bamboos and returned home. The day after that he went back to Palyang Chu and made snares with the threads and set them on the trees and returned and climbed on his mother's lap and told her what he had done. His mother told him that he must go back early in the morning. He did so and found all the different sorts of birds caught in the snares, so many that they made a full load. When he had collected the birds he reset the snares and then went home and said to his mother "Mother, if these birds are good to eat, eat them and take them as my repayment for your milk: if they are no good, throw them away." Itpomu replied "They are good to eat: and I accept them as a recompense for my milk."

The next morning Tarbong returned to the tree, but instead of birds in the traps he found in every trap a penis, exactly like real life, made out of wood.

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539 581 703 Tarbong was angry at this, threw the penises away, and reset the traps. Then he went home and climbed on to his mother's lap and said "Mother, today I have nothing to bring you; there were no birds in the traps, just penises of wood." At this his mother said "If you are my son, you will go and hide yourself so carefully that even the birds cannot see you, and then in your hiding place you can stay and see who does this thing." The next morning he returned and found the snares again full of penises; he threw them away, and reset the snares and then hid himself so well that even the birds could not see him. After a time a beautiful girl dressed in *kaji lasong* (nettle cloth) arrived and started to make wooden penises. She was very beautiful; her name was Na Rip Nom, and her mother was Ta Im Ta Mit. Tarbong was angry when he saw her doing this and he climbed up the tree to try to stop her, and they struggled and rolled hither and thither; and then he got excited and tried to rape her, but he could not do so and so they separated and he went home and climbed on his mother's lap and said to her "Mother, I have come home without any birds." "What did you see, my son?" "I found Naripnom making penises of wood, and I tried to copulate with her, but I could not. So I return empty-handed. She is very beautiful." Then Itpomu said "If you want to possess that girl you had better go to your elder brother Komsi*thing* who lives at Rungzing Patham."

So Tarbong went to Komsi*thing*, and when he saw his younger brother he asked him why he had come. So Tarbong told him (*recapitulation*): "This girl was putting penises in my traps, and I wanted to possess her but could not, and my mother advised me to come to you." Then Komsi-*thing* said "How can you expect to possess the girl unless you give the marriage price *nyomsa afaar* and make a sacrifice with *chi* and butter *sakyou tsok rum-faat?* Do you love this girl?" "Very much." "Then I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Nepal and get from him the pig of the plains Malu Mayeng and buy a copper vessel." So Tarbong went to Nepal and brought back a pig and a copper vessel. When he returned Komsi*thing* said "I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Bhutan to get the cloth *kamo*." So he went to Bhutan and returned with the cloth, and then he had the pig and the copper pot and the cloth. (*The story cumulates—The House that Jack Built.*) From his Tibetan *ingzong* he got a rug Numbo. From Mayel near Konchen he got millet. From Kanyong (Sikkim) he got an ox.

Now at this time there was no fire in the world; it was only in the land between earth and heaven called Mashyok Matel where the demons dwelt, in the houses of the Deut *moong* who were smiths and were called Tangshyo Tangong Karvo. Now when Komsi*thing* told Tarbong to go there to fetch fire to cook the millet he was frightened and said he would not go among the devils for then they would eat him. So Komsi*thing* called on all human beings and animals and birds and insects to volunteer to go and fetch the fire, promising rewards of gold and jewels and rich cloths. When this offer was made the bird Kahryok Fo smiled and said "I will go for a reward." And the bird flew there and found the smith's house empty as all the people were out working elsewhere, so it took a brand in its beak from the fireplace and flew back. On its way back it came to the Kashou tree (chestnut); there it felt hungry, and laid the brand on a branch while it looked for fruit. But the wind blew and the flames sprang up and a great fire raged over the world, and the bird was caught

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in it; that is the reason why till this day it has short feathers and a black face. It was ashamed and did not return to Komsi*thing*. 539

Komsi*thing* waited for the bird but it did not come and he saw the fire, so he asked for another volunteer; and this time an insect (? *wasp or firefly—like a grasshopper, but flies*) *taknyom nomyor nyom* volunteered to go for a reward. When it got to the smith's house all the Deut *moong* were away, so it lay on its back by the fireplace and looked at the house upside down; and the whole house turned upside down. When the Deut *moong* returned from the west it found its house upside down and searched and found the insect who had done it lying on its back; he tried to catch it, but it wriggled and flew away. The Deut *moong* said "Why have you upset my house in this way? I shall kill you for it." The insect said "If you do kill me, your house will never get straight again." "Please don't do that. What have you come for?" "Komsi*thing* has sent me to fetch fire." "I will give you some, if you promise to straighten my house; but you cannot carry fire in your mouth." "Yes, I can." They argued, and finally the insect took a brand in its mouth, and the Deut *moong* put a flint and tinder up its backside. On his return the insect rested by the Mong Ing Pong tree, and put down the brand at the foot of the tree; but the wind came and blew it to a blaze and the insect got therefrom a black face. But it flew back to Komsi*thing* and gave him the flint and tinder from his backside, since he had lost the brand; and he told him all that the Deut *moong* had told him, and showed him how to make a fire with dry grass. So they made a fire and cooked the millet in the copper vessel, but, when the millet was cooked they found they had no yeast. 581 773

The only person who possessed yeast was an old woman who lived in the plains called Numli-*nyou*; so Komsi*thing* asked who would volunteer to go and fetch it, promising great rewards. The insect *takder thing* said it would go and it went to live with the old woman for some days and helped her. One day she started to prepare *chi*, and cooked the millet; but when it came to the moment of putting in the yeast she covered *takder* with a close woven basket *tangar*. But when *takder* was inside he cried "Grandmother, in this basket I can see everything which is going on in the world; if you want to hide something from me you should cover me with a *tangjang* (this is a loose woven basket)." The old woman believed what he said and covered him with a *tangjang* and so he could see all that she was doing, though he pretended he could not. He saw her take a pot from the back of her neck, and pour something from it into her hands. Then she rubbed her hands together and scattered the dust over the cooked millet; she replaced the pot; and put the millet in the basket. Then *takder* cried "Grandmother, please take me out of this basket; I am suffocating." So Numli-*nyou* removed the basket.

After two days the lovely smell of ferment rose from the millet, and then the old woman put it in an earthen pot and covered the pot well up, and stood it over the fire. *Takder* tried to get the pot with yeast in it, but he could not; at last he hit on a plan. He told Numli-*nyou* he could see a louse in her hair and asked her to let him remove it: she agreed so he jumped on her shoulders and started delousing her. While this operation was going on Numli-*nyou* became sleepy; and then *takder* removed the pot very very slowly and very very quietly and ran away. When he was half-way away she woke up and missed *takder*. Then she discovered the theft and saw him running away and shouted after him

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539 581 773 "I thought you were my grandson, but I see you are nothing but a thief; you have stolen my yeast and will give it to everybody all over the world. So I set my curse on it; may it make everybody who drinks it drunk and quarrelsome." And so it has been; when people get drunk they quarrel.

When *takder* returned to Komsi*thing* with the yeast, Komsi*thing* asked him if he knew how to make *chi*: *takder* said he did (*complete recapitulation*) and they followed his instructions; but since they had no earthenware pots to put the fermented *chi* in they put it in baskets, well covered with leaves. Then Komsi*thing* asked *Taknyom* what reward he desired for bringing the fire: *Taknyom* replied "Gold and jewels and clothes are no use to an animal; what I want is to be given the plants *mangder* and *sanghlo* which grow in the valley." (*He was given these.*) Similarly *Takder* (*complete recapitulation*) was granted the leavings at the bottom of the spoons and plates and patyoot.

When the *chi* was ready all were afraid to be the first to drink. Eventually the snake Putsong *beu* was summoned and drank it; when it had drunk it dashed away like lightning. Seeing this all the gods and men were frightened to drink. After that the snake Pamol *beu* was summoned; but when it had drunk it ran about biting people and animals so that they all died. (When Sangé *rum* saw that the snake would kill everybody if it was allowed to behave so he set a lock on its mouth; and nowadays it bites very few people.) Next the snake Poblyok *beu* was summoned: when it had drunk it fell senseless. Komsi*thing* gave that snake the ferns to live in; it is harmless. After this they thought that the *chi* was harmless; but then they found they had no butter for *Sakyou faat*. So Komsi*thing* went to Itpomu and asked for butter so that they could *Sakyou faat* for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripmu. He said to his mother "We have the *chi*, but no butter." Itpomu said "Get a bamboo *yongtong*," and when he had got it she filled it with the butter which she had from her cows. Then on her instructions nine containers (*takner*) of *chi* were prepared, and their edges were smeared with butter.

Now all the gods and men gathered for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripnom. Everything was prepared in due order; all the gifts were placed on one side, and then Komsi*thing rum faat* with *chi* and *sakyou*. This is the reason why today when a marriage is celebrated all the gods are worshipped, and these gifts are given. Only when Tarbong and Naripmu were husband and wife was he able to possess her. This is the reason why to-day Lepchas still give the same gifts; this is BRI-IT, the origin of marriage.

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APPENDIX V

LEPCHA STORIES

(As has been stated in Chapter Ten, the Lepchas' favourite amusement is to tell and listen to stories, of which they have a very large repertoire. A collection of these stories would doubtless fill many volumes; I was told a very considerable number. I am giving here four typical stories of the type told by Lepchas for entertainment. I have abbreviated them all by cutting out the internal repetitions.)

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(a) THE STORY OF LYANG MOK MOONG

A frightening story about devils.

Once there were two boys who were great friends; one lived at Sabeun and the other at Karhyong (places very near Lingthem). They used to set traps for birds on a *gehr* tree on the far side of Sungzoom mountain. The boy from Karhyong used to come to Sabeun and they would climb the mountain together; when they had cleared the traps they would take their catch down with them and divide it at Sabeun.

Now one day the boy from Sabeun suggested to his friend that, instead of his making the journey to Sabeun on the day after the morrow, they should both go separately and directly to the tree and meet there; the boy from Karhyong agreed. But when the boy from Sabeun arrived at the tree he saw no trace of his friend and no footprints; this was because a devil had killed him and eaten him just by the place where the elder Mrs. Lumba's field-house now stands. Since his friend was not there the boy from Sabeun started emptying the traps; in the middle of this he thought he saw his friend coming towards him; but in truth it was the devil in disguise. The disguised devil said: "I tried to catch you up, but I could not, and you have reached here first." Then, as he saw the boy from Sabeun taking the birds out of the trap the devil asked him "How on earth did you climb the tree?" and then made an attempt itself to climb up by standing on its hands and putting its feet high up on the trunk. Of course it could not climb in this way.

Then the devil took out of the front of its dress the head of the boy from Karhyong all dripping with blood, and it said to the boy from Sabeun: "Do you like eating *ka-sok* root?" and with that started gnawing at the head. Now when he did this the boy from Sabeun realised he was faced with a devil and was very frightened; he thought to himself if I come down from the tree the devil will eat me too. So he made a plan and gathered together all the bird-traps on the tree and made three bundles of them, one big, one medium

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539 and one tiny. First of all he threw the big bundle a little way away; the devil thought it was a man and ran to attack it. Then he threw the medium bundle farther away, and the devil ran after that; then he threw the tiny one a very long way away and the devil ran after *that* one; and when the devil was as far away as possible the boy climbed down the tree and ran quickly home to his house (it was the house of one of Serving's forefathers) and there he told what had happened to him (*complete repeat*) and then died.

It is on account of this that old people used to say that friends should not make appointments in distant places, for instead of one of the friends a devil will come. But nowadays it is not so dangerous, for more people live in the neighbourhood, and the lamas with their books have controlled the devils.

. . . . . .

Tafoor, who told this story, added: "Whether this story is true or not the following story is certainly true. The 'big mother' of Ashyok *youmi* and Gongyop's father Sankip were lovers and used to meet together in the field-house, where at some seasons of the year the woman used to live. Now one day she made an appointment with her lover for the evening and in expectation of his coming cooked a meal of manioc and pumpkin. But Sankip did not arrive, and when it got dark she thought she saw her husband sitting on the bamboo ends which projected from the side of the field-house like a verandah. She thought her husband had come instead of her lover, so she decided to make the best of it and built up a big fire and called to her husband to come in. But when the flames of the fire lept up and cast a clear light the figure turned its head aside so that its face could not be seen; the woman realised at once that it was a devil. So she fetched a bow and arrows and a knife and placed them beside her, and all night she kept a big fire burning and sat watching. When the first cock crowed at Sanklong the figure disappeared. As soon as it was light enough the woman went to look for footprints, and found the prints of feet *without any toes*. After this horrible experience she became a Mun."

(b) THE STORY OF MELOAN MOONG

A comic story about devils.

(This story was told by Chala Mandal with great vivacity. He imitated the curious falsetto broken speech which indicates devil talk and at the climax imitated all Mother devil's actions in pantomime.)

A very long time ago when there were no lamaist books and only very few people living here in Lingthem there were two families who had their houses just below my (i.e. the Mandal's) house, where there are rice-terraces today. Nearby is a white cliff with a hole in it and inside that hole lived a family of devils called Meloan; the family consisted of a mother and father and two children.

Now one day the members of the households all went out to work in the

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fields, but they left behind a boy called Pun-sho-hang to look after his baby brother. While they were all alone mother Meloan *moong* came and captured Pun-sho-hang and took him home to kill him and eat him; she locked him up with her children in the hole in the cliff and then she went away to work. The boy was very frightened and started to cry and said: "How miserable I am! the devils are going to kill and to eat me!" When he cried the tears ran down his face; but the devil children had never seen tears and they were very curious and they came and licked up his tears. Pun-sho-hang was very angry at this and beat the devil children with his knife, chasing them into every corner of the cave.

In the morning—for devils work by night—mother and father Meloan devil came back bringing with them charcoal and *pasom* fruit (an inedible nut) as rice, with earthworms for a relish. All the devils ate this fare, but Punshohang threw his away. At this the mother devil said in her whining voice "Pun-sho-hang-ne mi-fyol-ne ma-cha-ne-pa . . . ? etc." (*This is devil language* "Pun-sho-hangy-wangy doesn't eaty-peaty charcoal-woaly . . . etc.") The next evening the same thing occurred. (*Complete repeat with lots of devil dialogue.*)

Then after dinner the grown-up devils went out again and locked up Punshohang with the devil children and he cried again and they licked his tears (*complete repeat*) and Punshohang hit the devil children with his knife and chased them all over the place, so that they were very sore. Then he felt sleepy. so he laid down to rest, using the scabbard of his knife, which he held in his hand, as a pillow. When he was drowsy the devil children came up to him and shook him and said in shrill devil voices: "Pun-sho-hang-ne ta ha!" and they pointed out to him the place where the door-key was; for they thought he would beat them a lot, and so that they would be happier if he went away. When Punshohang opened his eyes he saw the key; he was very glad and opened the door and started to run away home.

But before he had got home mother Meloan returned and saw the door open and started to pursue him by following his footprints. Punshohang saw her coming after him; but he found a pit which had been dug to look for manioc root, so he hid in that, and pulled leaves and grass over him, so that the pit would not show. When the mother devil saw that the footprints had stopped she hunted all round but could find no trace; so she sat down on the edge of the pit to consult her oracle. She undid her sash and bared her parts; the hair hung right over her vulva. She looked fixedly at it and then made the invocation "Reshing tam-et tam tam" (*this is magic*) at which the long pubic hair erected at once and then pointed straight down to show that the boy was underground. Punshohang was in the pit looking up at her. But this seemed nonsensical to the mother devil so she put a number of other questions to her bush (*all given in full*) but each time it pointed straight down. She kept on questioning it, getting angrier and angrier, till in the end she cried "My bush is telling me lies!" And with that she pulled it out with the skin and returned home.

Then Punshohang crept out of the pit and returned to his home; he had been lost for two days and two nights and everybody had been searching for him. When he returned home he stank horribly; so they washed him all over with strained *chi*. Then his parents asked him where he had been? He

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539 told them the whole story (*almost complete repeat*) and when he had finished talking he fell down dead.

(*Note*: this story takes about an hour to tell: the devil's home-life and conversation, and especially the mother devil with her oracle are almost hysterically funny, and the jokes are repeated and repeated with only slight variations. The story is only slightly sinister, because, since the advent of the lamas and their books, Meloan devils no longer live near Lingthem. It is said however that a man at Tangvoong (a village about ten miles away) was killed and eaten by these devils; all that was found of him was his belt and his bones.)

(c) A LEGEND OF THE KINGS OF TIBET AND SIKKIM

Commencement only.

Once upon a time there was a king called Agyap Patso Numgé; he was a human being, but his sister Queen Ong-Bala was a devil. She lived in a separate palace of her own, and all the common people served the pair of them. Queen Ong-Bala used to sit on a high throne, but her vulva lay on the ground at her feet. She used to make all the men who came to serve her copulate with her; but that could not satisfy her. And then she had horses to copulate with her; but she was still unsatisfied.

At that time there was living in the village of Salim (a village on the far side of the river Talung, opposite Zongu) a man called Lablo Aring, whose penis was so enormous that he coiled it eight times round his waist, and still had enough left over at the end to gratify an ordinary woman. Queen Ong-Bala heard of him and sent two ambassadors to fetch him. They said "Our Queen has sent us to fetch you," and so he went with them. When he arrived at the palace the Queen was seated on her throne; she made Lablo sit down on the ground at her feet and had him fed with *chi* and rice and meat, and he drank eight *patyoot* of *chi* and ate eight seers of meat and a great heap of rice. Then the Queen spoke to him saying "Kam-dak nam ryou? Ka-tsong nam ryou?" (This means: "Is the millet harvest good? Is the maize harvest good?" and is a *tang-bor* referring to the male genitals.) Lablo replied "A-nyou, tuzi; nam ryu-am." (Thank you, lady; the harvest is quite good.) "If that is so," said the Queen, "let us sleep together." Lablo assented and undid one coil of his penis. "I thought you said the harvest was good!" the Queen exclaimed peevishly. "Is that all you can do?" Then he undid the second coil (*repeating repeats*). . . . When the seventh coil was undone the Queen exclaimed "Now I know the harvest was indeed good! Please stop." But Lablo refused; he undid and inserted the eighth coil and this hurt so much that the Queen cried out "Now at last I am satisfied! I want no servants and I want no horses!" When all was finished the Queen gave Lablo another good meal (*the menu given*) and sent him home to Salim; and to this day the men of Salim have big penises.

Now the Queen was made pregnant by this and eventually bore twin sons; the elder, called Tsayong, had only one eye in the centre of his forehead. The younger was named Dé-ong.

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When these sons were grown big the Queen made a plan to kill her brother the King. He was at the hot springs for his health, and she sent thither two supposed Tibetan doctors to advise him. But when the doctors were pretending to feel his pulse they really severed his arteries. As soon as the King realised what had happened he held the severed arteries in his hand and sent for his minister Yookshing Takshé and told him to go and revenge him and kill the Queen. Yookshing Takshé made his plan; he dressed in plain clothes without any weapons—not even a knife; and he presented himself at the Queen's palace with simply a scarf and a rupee in his hand. First of all the sentries refused to let him enter though he insisted that he must present the scarf and the coin to the Queen personally; but when they saw how harmless he was they let him pass. It was midday at the time and the Queen was sleeping; so the minister stuffed the scarf down her throat and thereby suffocated her; at the same moment the King let go the arteries he was holding and expired.

Yookshing Takshé returned to the King's palace and killed the two Tibetan doctors by catching them by their heels and throwing them in the river—for he was a very strong man. They did not burn the body of the King till they saw the smoke rising from the Queen's pyre. . . .

(This is the first instalment of one of the long stories which take a week to relate every evening after sunset. The continuation deals with the King's young son, whom the Queen's sons try to kill; he is rescued by the minister after a number of peripetiae. When this son grows up he lives as a farmer in the jungle until one day four people arrive and recognise him as king. His palace of Phyong Di is built with the help of the people of Mayel. The King of Sikkim refuses to recognise the prophecy of his minister Lapchen Chimbu that the Gurkhas are going to invade the country; Lapchen Chimbu leaves, the Gurkhas invade; the King is with difficulty smuggled into Tibet, and a new royal line of Sikkim is started by the chief general.)

(*d*) FABLES—LUNGTHEN

(*Such as are told at weeding parties*)

Why the Leopard and Monkey are enemies.

Once upon a time a monkey and a stork (?) set up a pact of friendship. After they had done so they sat on different branches of a big tree, under which was deep mud, and competed as to who had the loudest voice. The monkey told the stork to shout first, but it refused so the monkey started. It shouted so loudly that it shook the tree, but the stork was not disturbed. Then the stork shouted fairly softly. "That's nothing," the monkey said. Then it shouted so loudly that the monkey fell off the tree and into the mud up to its neck and the stork flew away.

"Oh dear, I'll die; I'll starve to death," the monkey cried to itself. And it was almost starving when an elephant arrived. To it the monkey said "Are you not my elder brother? Please pull me out of this, and then you can kill me and eat me." But the elephant took no notice and went on. Then the rhinoceros . . . and puma (*two repeats*). . . . Then the wild goat arrived,

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539 but when the monkey had made his suggestion he refused and said "Others are following; they will free you." Then grandfather tiger . . . and the cheetah . . . (*two repeats*) passed. Then the leopard came and the monkey said "Please pull me out of this, and then you can boil me and eat me." But the leopard replied "No: I must go on with the others." But after it had gone on a little way the leopard thought to itself "I could get time to take that monkey out and boil it and eat it, and still catch up with the others" So it went back to the monkey and told it it had decided to accept its offer to eat it. "Very well," said the monkey. "First of all you must dig a pit, and get firewood and cooking stones, and you must take me out and dry me before I will be ready to cook."

The leopard did as he was told and put the monkey on a stone. "Po-gi na-gu" (come here, bending bamboo) cried the monkey. "What did you say?" asked the leopard. "I was asking you if you had got the fire and stones ready," replied the monkey. When the leopard was lighting the fire in the pit the monkey cried "Po-gi na-gu" again. "What's that?" asked the leopard. "I said turn me round so that I can dry on the other side," said the monkey. The leopard did so. "Po-gi na-gu," cried the monkey a third time. "What's that?" said the leopard. "I said you must go and fetch the water to boil me in," said the monkey. But this time the bending bamboo had heard the monkey's cry and it bent down and the monkey climbed up on to it and from that safe eminence shat all over the leopard. At this the leopard was angry and said "Henceforth there will be enmity between you and me. Now I shall hunt and kill and eat you always, night and day." And that is the reason why nowadays leopards kill and eat monkeys.

The origin of eating fish.

Once upon a time there lived in the Rangit river a devil which was partly a fish and partly a woman; it had long hair and breasts and a vulva. This was a very wicked devil which was destroying all the other fish; it did not kill them properly but bit pieces out of them. So Tashey-*thing* (or Guru Rimpuché; the story is told with either protagonist) decided to kill the fish; he made a bamboo fish trap, and after hunting the devil for three days he caught it and killed it. As a punishment for what the fish had done he cut up the body when it was killed; then he dug a pit and made a fire and heated two big stones; one big stone he put on the bottom of the pit; then he put in the fish's carcase; on that he put the other hot stone and covered everything up. Some hours later he uncovered the body; but it was very hot when he took it out and some fat got on his thumb. He shook it off and then put his scalded thumb into his mouth; and from that day onwards everybody can eat the flesh of fishes.

The story of the blackbird and the crab.

Once upon a time there was a blackbird which was flying round a bush catching insects, when he saw a crab with its great big staring eyes walking by the bush. The blackbird asked the crab what it was doing, to which the crab replied that it was very hungry and was looking for food. Then the blackbird suggested that they set up a pact of friendship; the crab agreed,

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and they then made their plans to go hunting the wild boar in the forest. The crab said "You take the wide path: I'll follow you," and in that order they went into the forest; the bird uttered its cry "Tcher tchir tchet" and caught a wild boar, but all it could do was to pull out one hair. This happened three times and eventually the crab got angry and said "You can't manage this, my friend; we'd better change places; I'll take the wide path and you follow." The crab laid down on the wide path with its claws open and caught the boar by its throat; the blackbird flew up from behind, and between them they killed the boar, cut up the meat and heaped it up into a big pile. But when all was ready for cooking they found they had no fire to cook it with, so the crab told the blackbird to go and look for some. 539

The blackbird set out and on its search came to the house of the she-devil Samoo. There he asked for fire and the she-devil asked "What do you want it for?" The blackbird said "We went out hunting so we couldn't carry any fire with us." The devil then gave him a firebrand but told the blackbird it must shake it all the way back. The blackbird took it back to the crab and the two of them cooked the meat; but the devil had followed the sparks and came to try and get the food. But the blackbird flew away with its portion into the tree and the crab took his into the water. Nevertheless they were very angry and the blackbird decided that they must kill the person who was trying to steal their meat. So he flew about in the forest and at last found some raw latex and dropped it all over the devil's body so that the devil was extremely unwell for several days.

When she finally recovered the devil decided to take her revenge. She therefore sewed up her anus and went to drink up all the water from the pool where the crab lived. She had drunk so much that the crab was visible on the bottom when the blackbird flew down and pecked open her anus so that all the water fell out and the pond was refilled. The devil was thus foiled three times, and got even angrier; so she went into the forest to look for latex, and covered her anus with it and started to drink the water again. When the crab was visible the blackbird flew down again, but this time its beak was caught in the latex. The devil immediately put the bird into a cage, and tied up the crab's claws. Then she returned to her home, hung up the blackbird in the cage and kept the crab with its claws tied up.

One day the two of them were basking in the sun, and the crab was very drowsy because it could find no water. The blackbird cried to the devil "Mother! Our friend must be dying! He has a most horrible stink; just take a sniff!" The devil leant over to smell the torpid crab, which thereupon grasped the devil's neck between its claws and killed her. Then the crab opened the blackbird's cage with its pincers and they both escaped, the bird to the trees, and the crab to the water.

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193 Although fundamentally monosyllabic a great number of Lepcha words have modifying prefixes which are always used in conjunction with the word to give a different sense, so that practically the words have become bisyllables. There are no true polysyllables, though the addition of modifying prefixes and suffixes may produce polysyllables. In bisyllables the stress is usually on the second syllable.

A distinguishing feature of Lepcha is the initial a-, which is added to a great many monosyllables. The existence of this a- appears to depend entirely on euphony; it is always suppressed in compound words and often in speech. Thus *a-nyou* (lady) becomes Narzong-*nyou* (Lady Narzong—a goddess); *a-mu* (mother) becomes *ma-thim* (Big mother) and so on. Euphony is also the reason for a number of varying features in Lepcha speech; thus the plural suffix is *-song*, *-ʒong*, or *-pong* according to the sound of the word to which it is suffixed.

There is no true gender in Lepcha, though a certain number of kinship terms and words definitely implying sex (male and female mammals e.g.) have gender connotations. There is no gender distinction in the third person pronouns.

The stems of words are modified only in the case of the three singular pronouns, which have different stems for the nominative and objective cases.

Nominative	accusative	genitive	dative
(I) go	kasum	kasi	kasum
(thou) Ho	a-dom	a-do	a-dom
(he) Hu	ha-dom	ha-do	hum

In all other nouns and pronouns the genitive is indicated by the suffix *-sa*, ideas of motion by *-ka*, ideas of direction by *-rem* and ideas of action (ablative) by *-nun*. These suffixes are not added if the sense is clear otherwise.

Verbs are not modified to express the idea of number, but there are a great number of suffixes to indicate time and mood. The distinction between nouns and verbs is arbitrary; many nouns can receive verbal suffixes, and verbal nouns can be produced by the addition of *-shang* or *-lung* to the stem.

The sentence order indicates the sense to a great extent. Qualifying genitives precede the noun they qualify; indirect objects precede direct objects, and the operative verb comes at the end of the sentence. As an illustration of Lepcha syntax I am giving part of the first paragraph of the last fable in Appendix V (The story of the blackbird and the crab) with a literal translation.

193 *Iaba chahim-fo dyap-ka a-fi a-ʒhu lewn-long tam-bik tsaam. Otetka*
539 Formerly chahim-bird bush-at hither thither fly-doing insect catch. Then

o-re dyap-ka tahi kat amik kleup-kleup lom-am si. Chahim-fo-nun
that-one bush-at crab one eye blinking walk-ing see. Chahim-bird-by

tahi-rem vet "Ho abi shu ʒuk-am go?" Tahi-nun li "Go abi
crab-to ask "Thou there what doing indeed?" Crab-by say "I there

kreedok-nun aʒom dong-am." Otet-ka chahim-fo-nun ta-hi-rem ingʒong
hunger-been food search." That-at chahim-bird-by crab-to ingzong

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thik-ba : *eunun hanni nyet ingzong thik* . *Eunun mun-dyak-shang hanni* 193
set-up-would : then they two ingzong set-up. Then meat-pursue-to they

nyet toot-mat . *Nyet-la mon-tseu-mon dyak-shang toot-mat* . 539
two advice-make. Two indeed boar- pig pursue-to advice-make.

Eunun nyet-la panjok-ka nong. Tahi-nun li " Ho are pyong-ka ding-o
Then two-indeed forest-to go. Crab-by say " Thou this path-at walk-do

eunun go-re dyak-lung di-shu." Otet-ka thung-do tahi-do dyak-lung
then I indeed follow-ing come-will." Then- at really crab-indeed following

lom pyong-ka loong-lat. Chahim-fo-nun-sa alik tcher tchir tchet liklung
road path-on travel-did. Chahim-bird-by-of cry tcher tchir tchet cry-ing

mon-tseu-mon-rum cher sen-la a-tsang kat kat-aa kup ak . *Otetka*
boar-pig-at catch but hair one only small pull-out. Then

tahi-re sak-lyak " Ta-tsong-a ho ma-keut-ne : a-long a-do pa-lo
crab-that angry " Friend-oh thou not-can-not : therefore thee after

dyak-nu pyong-ka go ding-shu."
follow-do path-on I walk-shall."

[p. 496 is blank]

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is expelled or summoned it sees the "house" which has been 778
newly made in its honour and settles there in preference to a 765
human habitation. Having entered it becomes entangled in the arrangement of strings and can then be taken with the offering and thrown away. Simple-minded demons can be trapped with a simple kind of *yay:* some, however, are not so silly and can only be caught in an elaborate arrangement that looks like a series of concentric spiders' webs inside several intertwined triangles. It is well known what sort of *yay* is required to catch any particular demon; and it seems that the latter never learn sense.

The three heads of the Go-sum are coloured respectively red, blue, and yellow to match the *yay* which is stuck behind the neck of each.

Gyong-bo: six. These are thin bamboo slivers with tufts of wool at the top and at intervals down their length. They represent *Tarchuk*, or prayer-flags for the living.

When these things have been arranged round the Go-sum the whole is garnished with leaves, brambles and flowers in season. A handful of assorted grain is sprinkled over it, and all is then complete. It is now taken and placed on the ground in front of the altar, after which the ceremony proceeds. The one Tafoor made for me took him the best part of one whole day; and while he was doing it he told me the following story:

THE STORY

There was once a god named Hla-Chongbu-Gadjen, whose 539 ●
second daughter was in the habit of stealing flowers, the property of other gods. Because of this she was expelled from heaven and sent to live in the world. In due course she was reborn in Nepal, at a place called Pe-Yu Chorten.* Little of the girl's early life is known except that she was an orphan, and was taken into the household of the Maharaja of Nepal.

* This is Tibetan and merely means "(the place of) the Tibetan Chorten." A chorten is a Buddhist tope, or stupa. It is usually in the form of a huge dome.

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539 During this time she became pregnant by one of his grooms, and in due course gave birth to a son. The same thing happened with the master of the dogs; and again with the steward in charge of the pigs. For many years she lived with her three sons and earned her living by selling eggs and chickens. She must have had an immense poultry farm, for in a short time she is said to have accumulated no less than three lakhs of rupees, or in English money twenty thousand pounds! When she had accumulated all this wealth she one day took a bullock skin and asked for an audience with the Maharaja. She laid the skin on the ground in front of him and begged him to give her a piece of land of similar size. She wanted it, she said, to build a chorten. Seeing the insignificant size of the piece of land required the Maharaja readily consented: but when the girl got back she shredded the skin and spun it into a long rope. She then arranged it on the ground in the form of a circle: it covered several acres of land, and on this she arranged to build her chorten. She started to work on her own; but finding this too arduous she bought an elephant and a donkey, which she used to carry the necessary stones to the site. When the work was only half completed she suddenly died; and was immediately transported to the home of the gods, whence she had originally come.

The chorten remained in this half-finished state for many years, when the eldest of the three sons called his brothers to him with a view to completing the work. When it was ready the three brothers offered it ceremonially to the gods; each at the same time making a personal request.

The eldest brother asked that he might reincarnate as a very great god. His request was granted, and in due course he was reborn at Budh-Gaya as the god Sangay Chomden. The second brother now made his request; he asked that instead of reincarnating in the ordinary way he might be reborn in the bud of a flower: also he wished to be the overlord of all the demons and gods inhabiting the human world. Both these requests were granted. The youngest brother asked

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that of all human beings he might be the wisest, and a great 539 and a holy lama.

When the three brothers had made their requests the elephant imagined that his turn would come. He knew that he had worked as hard as anyone, and was wondering what he could ask of the gods. To his surprise, however, the three brothers asked no boon for him, and he found that he was completely ignored. He therefore prayed that he might be reincarnated in some form which would make him the master of the eldest brother. The same thing happened to the donkey: he too was forgotten, so he quietly prayed that when he was reborn he might have control of the youngest brother.

The elephant was the first to die, and he was shortly followed by the donkey; so that as the animals had prayed so did it come to pass. The elephant reincarnated as Deut Hlajen; and in this state he later quarrelled a great deal with Sangay-Chomden, the form in which the eldest brother was reborn. One day his minister came to him in great perturbation and told him that Sangay's death had been predicted to take place in three days' time; but in order to preserve the relative seniority in the next reincarnation it was essential for Deut Hlajen to die first.

Hlajen had six children: Alcohol, Tea, Pigeon, Crow, Rat, and Tobacco, who were born in that order. Since he must now die he called his sons around him, in order to decide which amongst them was capable of carrying on his bad work; for his was an evil spirit. Alcohol spoke up at once: he could lead even great Lamas astray by inflaming their desires. When he heard this Hlajen became slightly weaker and advanced one step towards death; but he was by no means satisfied that he had found a suitable successor. Then Tea spoke: he, too, could do much harm. He could make rich men poor by causing them to buy all sorts of expensive things: the cups, saucers, pots, and so on, necessary for drinking tea; butter too was essential, and this was also expensive. Since tea-drinking quickly becomes a habit, people would soon become impoverished. When the father

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539 heard these words he became yet a little weaker; but still he was not satisfied. Now it was Pigeon's turn; he said that he could do harm by fouling the sacred bowls in monasteries. But at this the father only merely smiled, and it had no effect upon his weakness. He then asked Crow what he could do. He answered that by sitting on the top of the poles of prayer-flags, and excreting on the flags below, he could make them ineffective and thus do quite a lot of damage. This pleased the father better and he became noticeably weaker. Finally Rat spoke: "Do not you worry, father," he said; "for I will destroy people's clothing, their books and any food they leave about." But even this did not please Hlajen overmuch. All this time Tobacco was smiling quietly in the corner. "I will go and be born again as a plant," he said; "people will then smoke me. By this means I can gradually destroy the world: moreover, the foul smoke, as it rises to heaven, will be displeasing to the gods." The father was delighted with this suggestion and immediately expired, with a clear conscience and untroubled soul. He was transported straight to Langarshay (?), and in due course reincarnated as the son of the Raja of that place.

He now became very friendly with the son of one of his father's poorer subjects, and the two boys decided to study together with a very famous Lama who lived in the town. One had his lessons in the day-time and the other went at night. After they had been working for some little time the two boys decided to compare their notes. In spite of the fact that they had both studied with the same master, it was apparent that their teaching had been completely different. It appeared the Lama had taught the poor boy properly; but had so instructed the Raja's son that his facts were wrong in every detail. The Raja's son was called Gulung Turba Nakbu, and the poor boy Gulung Tempak, these names having been given them by the Lama when they first came to him to study.

When the boys compared notes and found that nothing

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agreed they decided to visit the Lama together. When they 539
arrived he told them that Gulung Tempak had learnt everything correctly; but that the Raja's son had misunderstood him and got everything wrong, hiding the fact that he had deliberately taught him thus. He cursed him for being an ignoramus and prophesied that he would turn into an evil character.

The boy now became very troublesome, and by degrees turned into an absolute waster. He left his father's home and lived in a hut at the burning-place, where he fed on human flesh. Seeing the state to which affairs had come to pass, the god Hla Chungba Gadjin decided to take action, and accordingly he sent two minor gods to kill the Raja's son, as, quite apart from the grief he had caused his father, he was giving much trouble to the people of the town.

The two gods he sent were Tadin and Dorje Phukmu. Tadin split him in two by entering his head in the form of a thunderbolt, leaving his body by way of the anus. Dorje Phukmu did likewise, but in the reverse direction. As a result of this harsh treatment he died at once, but immediately reincarnated as Yishay Gumbu, a god with its soul divided into two portions. The smaller portion went down to the world in order again to cause trouble, and was reborn in the womb of a very old woman in the form of a *tanen*, or three-headed hermaphrodite. When the old woman saw what she had given birth to she was terrified. However, she gave the monster her breast, but was horrified to see that it was sucking blood. She decided to act at once, and matching up a kite's feather she plunged it into the central head (which was that of a bull) of her child, which appeared to die immediately. She then rushed out with the body and carried it away to the junction of several roads. There she left it, telling it that it was a demon and must never come back to the house.

After the *tanen* had been abandoned at the road junction it consumed everything all round it, including even the stones and the demons which lived inside them. No one who

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539 passed the spot was safe: he would be eaten up at once. The monster was never satisfied, and was causing trouble all over the place. Because of this the gods decided to send down Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was to remain and control it. Immediately on reaching the earth this god assumed a form identical with the *tanen*, only very much bigger. It had no difficulty in swallowing the *tanen* whole, which it did as soon as the two met. From inside the god's stomach the *tanen* started to grumble at the harsh treatment meted out to it; and so Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was really a compassionate being, at once excreted it on to the ground. As soon as it came to itself again Phapay addressed it thus: "You have eaten up all the people of this neighbourhood, and have done a great deal of damage of every kind. If, in future, you do not obey me implicitly I shall eat you again; and the next time I do so you will remain inside my stomach. If, however, you do as you are told I will give you the control of thirty devils. In order to do this, however, you must remain for ever on the earth."

The *tanen* agreed to do what was asked of it and has remained in the world ever since. That is why, when any of the thirty devils concerned is troubling a person, it is necessary to offer a Go-sum.

* * * * *

539 171 With very few alterations this story could be made to read like a tract; but I should be surprised to find that a missionary took any part in its invention! Its real interest, however, lies in the fact that it incorporates most of the known historical details concerning the construction of the famous Bodhnath stupa in Nepal. I was unaware of this at the time, and only came across the connection on my return from Sikkim, when I was reading through Waddell. It is of considerable psychological interest to note the difference between the oral Lepcha version of the story and that given in the printed booklet which is sold to pilgrims at the stupa; and for this reason I give below Waddell's translation in

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full. It seems to have been purged of all its coarser details; 539
or were they added by the Lepchas? I think this is not 171
unlikely; and that they have also incorporated the story of the Go-sum, which receives no mention in the printed version.

* * * * *

"This stupa enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the Buddhas of three times (i.e., the present, past and future), and of all the Bodhisats, and it holds the Dharmakaya.

"When king Thi-Sron Detsan asked the Guru, at Samyas, to tell him the history of the *Ma-gu-ta* stupa in Nepal, made by the four sons of 'the bestower of gifts,' named 'the poor mother Pya-rdsi-ma (fowl-keeper),' then the Guru thus related (the story):—

"In a former Kalpa—time beyond conception—the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, approached the Tathagatha Akitabha and prayed for the animals immersed in the miry slough, and after saving these he went to mount Potala. There he saw hosts of unsaved animals, innumerable like unto mounds of *murwa* lees, and (seeing this) he wept. Two of his pitying tears were born into Indra's heaven as god's daughters, named respectively Kan-ma and the little Kan-ma or Kan-chun-ma. This latter having stolen in heaven some flowers, was as a punishment reborn in earth, in a low pigherd's family in Maguta in Nepal, under the name of Samvara or 'the Chief Happiness,' her mother's name being Purna. On marriage she had four sons, and her husband's early death left her with the sole care of the family. She with her family undertook the herding and rearing of geese for the wealthy, and having in this pursuit amassed much wealth, the Ma-pya-rdsi-ma (or mother fowl-keeper) decided to build a large stupa in honour of the Tathagatha. She, thereon, went to the king and begged for a site, saying she wanted only so much ground as one hide could cover. The king assented, saying '*Ja-run*,' which literally means 'do' + 'can,' i.e. 'you can do (so).' Then she, cutting a

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539 hide into thin thongs (forming a long rope), enclosed that
171 very large space which now is occupied by this chaitya. And she, with her four sons, and a servant, and an elephant and an ass, as beasts of burden, brought earth and stones, and commenced to build this chaitya by their own personal labour.

"Then the king's ministers appealed to the king to stop such an ambitious building, as they asserted its magnificence put to shame the religious buildings of the king and the nobles. But the king answered '*Ka-Sor*'—which literally means 'mouth + (has) spoken'—and so refused to interfere. (Thus is the name of the stupa—'*Ja-run K'a-sor*'—accounted for.)

"After four years, when only the base had been laid, the mother died, but her four sons continued the building till its completion. And in the receptacle was placed one Magadha measure (drona) of the relics of the Tathagatha Kasyapa. This event was celebrated by the manifestation in the sky, above the stupa, of Kasyapa himself, and the circles of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisats, and their hosts of retinue, and amongst showers of flowers the gods contributed divine music and rained perfume. Earthquakes thrice occurred, and through the glory of the assembled divinities there was no darkness for five nights.

"One of the sons then prayed, 'May I in my next re-birth be born as a great scholar (to benefit mankind),' and he was born as Thumni Sambhota (the introducer of the so-called 'Tibetan' character, and the first translator of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan, *circa* A.D. 650.

"The second son prayed in a similar manner, and was reborn as 'The Bodhisattva' (the abbot of the first monastery of Tibet).

"Then the elephant or *lan-po* (hearing these prayers) said, 'These two, neglecting me who contributed so much assistance, are asking all the good things for themselves, therefore let me be re-born in a form to destroy them or their work.' And he was afterwards re-born as Lan-darma (the persecutor of Lamaism).

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"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed 539
that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil 171
of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is 755
believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be 753
used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum [214]
is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755
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came to a place called Sakyong Pantong, where the Mayel 773
people disappeared into the forest. By diligent searching, however, the Lepchas discovered their tracks. They followed the signs as far as Lungzong Chachyo(?) and then completely lost them, after which they returned and settled in Jonga.

They used to wear clothes made from nettles and hats of plaited cane, like those once worn by the Lepchas. They cultivated rice; also pumpkins, chillies, maize, and manioc, which they used to take and sell in the market at Zikchu Thum, a place in Tibet, and somewhere between Chumbi and Lhasa. They did not wish to be recognised; and it was for this reason that they went so far to dispose of their products. But during this time the Maharaja had been forced to remove his court to Chumbi (see Chapter 3) and his servants were in the habit of going to Zikchu on market days. Being for the most part Lepchas they, of course, recognised the Mayel people. They told the Maharaja what they had seen; but since the court shortly returned to Sikkim there was no opportunity to see them again; but it is believed they no longer leave Mayel.

Myths of this sort are, of course, constantly being re-interpreted; and of this particular one there are endless variations. Here is the version given by Jiroong:

"It is three days' journey from Lingtem to Mayel, which 773
was once visited by my great-grandfather. He was out 539
hunting at the time and came to a place where there were many big trees and a stream. He noticed a piece of wood floating on the water. It was moving slowly along and he decided to follow it. He came eventually to a narrow path, so narrow as to be like a knife-blade, where he saw some feathers lying on the ground. They belonged to a Mayel bird, which is the mother of all migratory birds that come to Jongu. He followed this path for three more days and came eventually to a village, where there were seven big and well-built houses. This was the village of Mayel; but at the time he did not know it. He went to the first house and asked for

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773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

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the annual sacrifice to Pong Rum, even though he hunts no 224
more. To neglect this duty would be to run the risk of being haunted by the god, who might cause one to drown oneself in the river. Karma no longer hunts, but when he gave it up he forgot all about the annual ceremony. One night, however, Pong Rum came and threw stones at an orange tree outside his house. It was a misty half-moonlight night and he could not see very clearly; but he could hear the stones come whizzing through the air. He went outside, lighted some incense, and put a little butter beside it. "Forgive me," he said to the Rum; "for I will hunt no more." He then went inside and lay down, thinking the god was satisfied.

About a month after this he was sitting quietly drinking one night when his dog suddenly started to bark. He went outside to investigate, but could see nothing; it was a wild, dark night. He went indoors again, but after a little while the dog again started to bark and then whined in a most peculiar way: Karma thought that perhaps someone had hit it. He went outside again; but again there was nothing to see. He walked all round the house, and then he suddenly noticed that his dog was lying dead; there were no marks on its body. It was the Pong Rum come again. Karma now does the annual ceremony regularly, and has not since been troubled.

Here is another hunting story. Some three generations 224
ago there was once a Mandal and his friend. The Mandal's 539
family guardian was a male god, that of his friend a female. The Mandal was exceedingly fond of hunting, but he never had any luck, whereas the other man never came home with an empty bag. The Mandal persuaded his friend to change gods with him, as he thought this might change his luck; to this his friend agreed. They sacrificed an ox, and placed it with some *chi*, butter, and grain. Then they each took their drinking bowls, smeared some butter round the rim, and made a libation to their respective gods, saying at the same time, "May my Rum be yours and yours mine." They did

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224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
● 539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
[439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177] days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."
773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

581 539 773

then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyom-far*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

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539 581 773 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539 mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581 you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773 like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285] such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285] special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

581 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour some-
539 thing out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was,
773 she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

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cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to live on such things up to the present day. 581 539 773

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the
172 fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

/Lepcha text follows./ (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

•539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

773 filled with young Lepchas. At that time they decided to do the following: "We will build a tower in order to climb up to the sky and to pull
•539 it down with a hook"; this they had decided. Then they made the decision to pile small clay pots one upon the other [and in this way to build a tower]. The place they chose was the plain of Ta-lom. Here, in order to carry out the work, they divided all the people into three groups: first, a group who formed the pots from crushed earth; second, [a group] of bearers; and third, those who placed the pots in layers; thus they were divided.

Now they heaped the vessels one upon the other and, placing them in layers, they almost reached the sky; at this time they already saw the sky very near; those who were working on top—when they caught sight of the sky so close at hand—thought: "If we had a forked stick, then we could pull down the sky." Then they called down to those who were below: "Hand us a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those down below understood: "Tear down, knock down!" Those working at the top of the tower then called again: "Hand up a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those below once again understood: "Tear down!" Now those working below cried: "Shall we tear it down?" Then those above cried out in anger: "Yes, tear down! Tear down!"

So those who were down below now got hammers, axes, and clubs and began to shatter the vessels at the base. When they had already made good progress in their work, the tower suddenly came tumbling down, crushing everything. Those who had climbed up to the top as well as those who had worked close to the foot of the tower were all killed by the clay pots falling upon them. Those who survived could, however, no longer communicate with each other.

But to construct a tower like this, no one was capable formerly except the Lepchas; and the experienced men who could teach such work, these were Lepchas. Up until that time they had all spoken the same language, but now, since they could no longer understand one another, they parted ways. Some of them went up [to the north], some down [to the south], others to the east and some to the west. As a result of this separation they settled the entire world, and thus there arose the numerous peoples and tribes existing today. —The place to which [the Lepchas] descended from the glacier mountain after their creation, lies in present-day Sikkim, and it is a plain upon which a great rice field is now located.

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which
614 makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

114 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong
614 are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly publications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came
● 539 into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

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●539

this tribe is situated in Sikkim, close to the confluence of the Raman and the Lingkhim Khola, within the realm of the Daramdin Estate. The ancestors of the Na ong, created inside the earth, emerged here from a gigantic hollowed boulder, which one could still see on the bank of the Raman a generation ago. (6)

6. During the heavy rains of the year 1899 this boulder was dragged deeper into the river bed where it is finally supposed to have sunk in the sand.

After their arrival on the surface of the earth the Na ong settled down at the place called Phugamdin, which today lies in the north-eastern part of the great rice field belonging to the Daramdin estate. /893/ — One day they became aware of the vault of heaven spreading above their heads, and since they thought that it was very low, they decided to build a tower of pots in order to reach the sky. — Since all the members of the tribe declared themselves in agreement with this plan, they immediately began to carry it out. The foundation of the tower was erected on the level surface of the present day Daramdin Field. The work progressed rapidly, and the building finally became so high that only two or three pots were still needed in order to complete the work. Because of this, the men working at the top of the tower became very excited. They called down to the helpers working below to hand up the required number of pots quickly. Now the command was passed down from man to man through the long chain of helpers, and when it finally reached the workers at the foot of the tower, its sense was already completely distorted; for now they understood it to mean that the tower was no longer necessary and should be torn down because the men standing at the top had already reached the sky. The men, women and children on the ground therefore proceeded to smash the lowest pots and as a result the entire construction collapsed with a terrible roar, burying beneath it all the members of the tribe. During its fall the tower broke into three great pieces, one of which fell on the mountain called Kaijalia within the limits of the present day Karmi estate, while a second portion of the tower plunged onto the Maney Hill in the precincts of the Relling estate, and the third piece finally came down near the village of Phedap, in the Nepalese district of Ilam. By the impact the above-mentioned mountains were pressed in to such an extent that today they show a clear saddle form.

113 Only a single man escaped from the disaster alive. Frightened
● 537 by what had happened and fearing the wrath of the divinity, which in his opinion had brought about the annihilation of the members of his tribe, he determined to leave the place of misfortune and to seek an abode in Nepalese territory.

Therefore he went to the village of Phedap, where he married one of the girls of this place. In the course of time once again a tribe was formed from his numerous descendants. It likewise was designated as Na ong. But this generation of the Na ong also didn't prove to be much smarter than its ancestors.

[118] One day the Na ong decided to kill the fish in the sacred river Mai-khola, which flows near the village of Phedap. This river was regarded as the seat of a mighty divinity, to whom at one time thousands of animals were sacrificed once a year by the local Nepalese population. The blood of these animals colored the stream red for days.

The Na ong thought now that the local millet beer, called marwa, was probably the best poison to kill the fish; since it could make a strong man drunk, it was surely well-suited to destroy all the fish living in this river. Therefore they poured /894/ huge quantities of millet beer into the stream, but the divinity of the river, enraged by this sacrilege, killed the entire tribe on the spot. Only a boy and an old woman escaped annihilation.

The woman took care of the boy, and when he had finally grown to manhood, he married, (7) and his descendants again lived in the

7. Tradition does not tell to what tribe his wife belonged.

village Phedap. But the tribe never again flourished — a fact ascribed to the displeasure of the river god who, despite all the sacrifices offered to it by subsequent generations of the Na ong, would not be pacified. When finally only a few Na ong were alive, about sixty years ago, one of them named Kaipal decided to leave the settlement on the banks of the Mai-khola and move with his family near the place where his ancestors had once built the tower; for here — so he thought — the remainder of the tribe would escape the wrath of the river god and, under the protection of the ancestral spirits, would again increase in number. His son Karandal, the transmitter of this legend, later married a Limbu girl from the Malboma sib in the new

113 dwelling place; this marriage produced four sons and three daughters,
●539 who, however, were apparently absorbed in the families of the neighboring Limbu. Thus the tribe of Na ong was finally completely extinguished.

113 The place where, according to the legend, the construction of the tower was undertaken is a plateau about two kilometers square situated in the western part of Sikkim, near the Indian-Nepalese border. To the west it is screened by a chain of mountains; to the south and the northeast it is bounded by two rivers. In the deeply fissured landscape of the Himalayan foothills a level plain of such proportions is a great rarity, and hence the plateau is clearly visible from a distance. It was subsequently transformed almost completely into a rice field, and only its extreme eastern corner, which bears the name Phugamdin and where — according to the legend —the first settlement of the Na ong arose, is uncultivated and today serves as a burial place for the Limbus, who recently settled in this part of Sikkim. (8)

8. A scholarly work on the burial methods of the Limbus — as well as an exhaustive investigation of this tribe — has unfortunately not yet been written. According to reports available up to now, the Limbu dead are generally buried, but sometimes cremated. Without doubt, however, the potsherds discovered in Daramdin cannot be grave-goods of the Limbus, for the Lepchas, who are sufficiently aware of the customs of this neighboring tribe — would in this case have ascribed no special significance to such findings.

172 While people are farming on the plateau — especially during the spring plowing — potsherds are constantly discovered; understandably enough, these findings are connected by the local inhabitants to the legend of the tower. Despite repeated questioning I still have not yet succeeded in obtaining some of the findings for closer examination; apparently the unearthed fragments are heedlessly thrown away by the populace.

/895/ The conditions which prevail at present in the Tibetan-Indian border region make it impossible, for the time being, to undertake any extensive investigation on the spot, and particularly any systematic excavations. I must therefore limit myself here to the observation that, according to the statement of the local inhabitants,

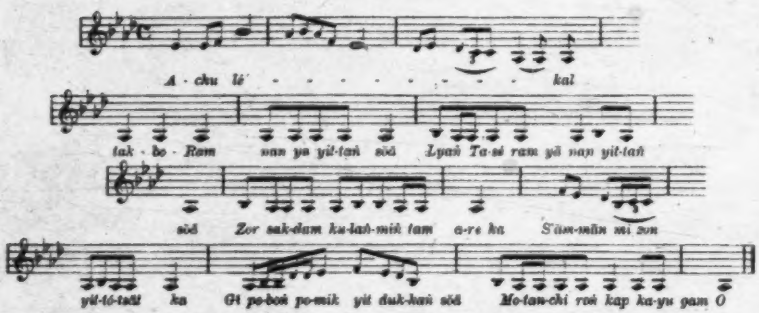
533 kindness of my wife who took it down in European notation. The first of these songs, *A-chu-lé*, shows traces of the very old pentatonic scale, says Sir SOURINDRO MOHUN TAGORE, to whom I showed it, and he adds in regard to this scale 'though it is observable in the Scotch ballads, it is the scale (still) in use amongst the Chinese, Japanese and Siamese'.

533 In the first song it will be noticed that the first verse has more even measure than any of the others and is evidently the oldest and purest. In the second, the resemblance
●539 between the primordial grand mother and Eve is very striking. The third and last verses, with their numerous Tibetan words and references to Buddhist symbolism, are decidedly modern, though many of their words have retained their *Tań-bor* expressions.

I.

A-CHU-LÉ!

O JOY!



A-CHU-LÉ!
Kāl [1]) *Tak-bo Ram nan yā yil-tań sōā*
Lyāā Ta-se Ram yā nan yil-tań sōā
Zor sak-dam ka-łań-mik tām ā-re-kā

S'ām-mān-mi son yil tó-tań ka
Gi po-boń po-mik yil duk łań sōā

Motanchi Roń kap ka-yu gam o.

A-CHU-LÉ!
Tar-s'i-s'em Nam-byań kuń yil so
Łań-bi-łań yil war-ñu-bā uń yil so-ó-re
Ñu-yil sak-ó-re ta-lyāā fo yil ma-o

O JOY!
The *kāl* Head-Father-Spirit in the olden time
Made the earth. (He) The Sky-Existing One
Made in this tearful [2]) world the fields to cover the (bosom of the stones.
When the *Sham-man-mi* men were made
And the *gi* jointed Bamboos and trees, at that same (time were we
The sons of the (one-) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs.

O JOY!
The *far-shi-sham* mulberry [3]) trees were made,
The rice, the vegetables were made,
The running rivers with the *so-o-re* fishes were made

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[1]) This has been suggested to me as meaning „dark", that is to say „mysterious", and thus implying that it has been borrowed from the Indian *Kāla*; but it seems to me to be a pure Lepcha word.
[2]) Also „rainy" (*zor*).
[3]) „Nambyong" is *Morus serrata*. The fruit also of „Nambong" (*Adina cordifolia*) is eaten.

●539 *So-kik-dyol yit ku-dé-ren yit tań kań*

Ta-t'ik nan yit tań sód
Tsat san-roń yit ńo nan yit ma o.

A-CHU-LÉ!
Mik-tań-mo ńo yit s'o-tiń-mo yak yit-tań sóa.

Lik-ser-mo tim-bre ka-ko-mu li-so

Ta-nan yit-tań sód s'al-mań-ti lyon s'ok

Nin-mań-ti ńin s'ok kā s'al-li-mu ā-li gó
Mu-s'al nan kā s'al-li-mu tyat ma lel-na pu
Ton kar-vo kap cham-bu gó s'u diń ma o.

A-CHU-LÉ!
Lu-ma-bor ka-bam lik-lar mań dyań bam

Fat ma yan nań ka lik-la-mań ka-s'ok.
Hyap-la-mań dyań tyet ma bon nan yoń 'só

Dā-sa mań tan-bo mi-tań-ding

Cham-bo kap nan mi-f'ik-mo s'u yāń lel-la.
A-chu-le! Sim-pā dup. Ta-s'i s'a. [1]

The *Sok-o-re* sky-birds were made. The ground *bag-* (dyol worms,
The *ku do-ren* insects and the rain bow were made
(All) by our first old great grand father.
(But our) *tsat-san-dong* [2]) troubles were made by our (old first great grand mother.

O JOY!
Then the *sho-ting* letters and the *mal-tong-mo* books (were made
The *ling-s'en-no* symbols [3]) and the *bo-ko-mo* augu- (ries *li-so*
If by my *s'al-man-ti* feeble attempts and *ñin-man-ti* (childish blunders
My *s'al-li-mu* tongue has not been fluent
I pray you will not cut off my *s'al-li-mu* tongue
(For) I am (only) a kar-vo young boy singing standing.

O JOY!
With my *lik-ma-bor* folded hands and *lik-la-ma* (folded hands.
With my not being able to unfold them
I beg you will not cut my *lik-la-ma* fingers and (*kyam-lā-ma* feet
(For) I am a *da-sa-man* paltry one, and a *mi-tang-ding* (child
Struggling *mi-f'ik-mo* I what can I sing?

II.

EN-YE!

A NEW YEAR'S SONG.

Only the first and last verses of this song appear to be ancient, the middle verse contains many Tibetan phrases and words.

EN YE!
Zor sak-dam lang-mik tim a-re-kā
Prat-tak-ñom sak-ñi sa-rong ra
Pat nam-nu lo zum gan nam-nu zum
Ryu ńań sa sak-ñi ong sa so-nāp yam.

EN YE!
Sher ts'o-di kik-tsum t'soń ńań sa
Chi-kar-mom s'ok [4]) *bi-kar-tsim du ńań sa*
Pe-re gi-po-tsar nam apin sa om [5]) *tim-bre*
Tim-bu yoń lob-don shu diń ma.

EN YE!
All the Rong and their kin have collected this day
On the field-covered stony bosom of the tearful earth
To-day is the day of happiness
To-night is the night of strength (renewed for the (New-Year).

We have *bi-kar-mom s'ok*, *bi-kar-cham* assembled
By the decree of *s'ar* fate and *Om* signs [6])
We sing this humbly standing up
For good luck for the *gi-po-tsań* coming year.

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[1]) The last two phrases are Tibetan.
[2]) The *d* as usually in Lepcha is often written *r*.
[3]) *Tim-bu* from Tibetan *rten-'brel*, the Buddhist *Nidānas* or Concatenation of Causes of Existence: this is viewed by the Lepchas as a magical charm, and the *Tań-bor* expression annexed may have belonged to an older word for such charms
[4]) The written version has *s'op*.
[5]) This syllable is out of the place in written version.
[6]) Literally *tim-bre* = *Nidānas*.

● 537 EN YE!

Mo-tan-chi Reń kap ńun non bīn	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lā-non po-long yit duk kań su	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsam* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsam po-mig duk kań su pa-s'or beń	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kang su Reń kap yam yoń s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

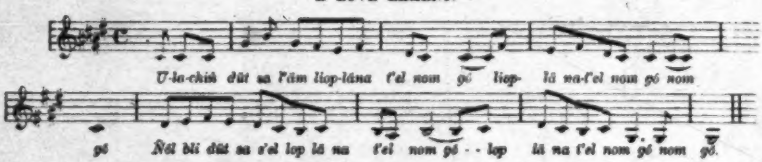
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the [574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the [273] guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUŃ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duń dūt sa-f'ām liop-lā na-f'iel nom pó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ńēl-bli dūt sa-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Soń la lyen s'u fań-ruń „ „ „ „	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer ki-rum nań nāń liop-lā diń mit nom pó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tań-kat sa-s'el „ „ „ „ „	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tań-yum diń-mit nom „ „ „ „ „	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bāl-la liop-lā na-f'iel nom pó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'ot ńań nāń „ „ „ „	Like a sorrowing *S'uń* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loń la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ns tak-sok buk go ma f'ān na-yań	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-che-ns* yam [7])
Kyoń-rāa-lo lat dok ś-tim-bu lāt non-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyoń-rāa-lo* heart.

[824] [1]) *Pu-shor* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Pu*" or „*Poa*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often [231] 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[415] [2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine crocana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poń-f'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poń-hin*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *hip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ńel-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Ism-s'u*.

[222] [7]) *Tak-sok-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

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Fōa-rōa-liā kar-gok go-ma zom-na-yaā	Though I ate not the *fōa-rōa-liā* wild plantain.[1])
Ar-tan-tsam bit dok ā-tim-bu lāt non-ni	I feel great pain in my *ar-tan-tsam* liver.
Chuā-sa-li ka-sok go ma-t'āu na-yaā	Though I took not the wild *chan-sa-li* yam[2])
Mar-ko bōu vā not ā-tim-bu lāt non-ni.	I am burned up with a fiery thirst.

V.

EH YE!	EH YE!
Sāk-la ma-run-ne loā la ma-run-ne	I feel very sad.
Mīt tan-gum mom-t'om āā-par-ko soā-ka	Listen O maidens behind! (respected) as *āā-par* great-mothers
Kyoā-ra-lo lat ā-re re favi-lā go	I feel this *kyoā-ra-lo* heart (of mine)
Ar-tan-tsam byat la-kaā kyāā la go ma.	Is pierced through and my *ar-tan-tsam* breath[3]) is chill.
EH YE!	EH YE!
Go-roā ko! Sāk la ma-run-ne	I feel very sad.
S'er t'so-di zuk-bo ram ko nun e	O Head-Father spirit, creator of *S'er* fate.
Om kiā-tsam s'u soā-kaw go dun ko che	Tell me what is my *Om* destiny!
Sak-la ma-run-ne loā la ma-run-ne	I feel very sad!
EH YE!	EH YE!
S'i-mān-mi kap gi-par-voā ñin kap sa-lo noā	I (am only) a *S'i-ruan-mi* boy,
Ki-dak tsam-ga-non san-roā	A *gi-par-voā* youngster. I implore you humbly standing
S'u mat noā ñaā go yoā s'ā diā ma ā	Why have you given me this *sa-lo-non* and *tsam-la-non* (sorrow
Sāk la ma-run-ne loā la ma-run ne.	I feel very sad.

VI.

Fak-tsam-non na yon	O you with the flowing hair!
Kiā tsam vaā na s'en	O fair one with the neat parted hair!
Mi-t'ik-no s'u yāā	Why have you *mi-t'ik no* charmed me so?
Kiā tsam vaā na lem	You fair one with the neat parted hair!
Duk-mar-bōu som t'ai	O old great grandmother *Tuk-ta-li Nā-soā*
Tuk-ta-li Nā-soā ko!	You *duk-mar-bōu* joiner of our breath
Zām-sa-li Fa-duā t'iā	O old great grandfather *Zam-sa-li* lord *Fa-duā*
A-yu ru-ma ā	Praise be to your names!
Kyoā-ra-lo lat dok	(But) why have you *ar-s'i-bau* created me?
Ar-s'i ban s'u yāt	Why have you *s'em-to-mi* created me?
S'em ta-t'i s'u yāt	Why have you *gi-par-vim* created me?
Gi-par-vim s'u de.	To suffer such heart-breaking sorrow?

The following seems a figurative declaration of affection by a youth of the valley the Singbali-river towards a girl of the Kirungpata-glen.

---

[1]) *Kar-gok* is the wild plantain (*Musa sp.*). It is full of large sharply jagged and irritant seeds. The cultivated plantain *Kar-duā* is seedless.

[2]) *Ka-sok* is a hairy round wild yam of large size, which grows near the surface of the ground, but its tubers cause intense thirst. Other wild yams found in Sikhim are *Sa-um-buk*, *Saā-gol-buk* and *Sa-li-buk* (?) probably the *Chuā-sa-li* of text.

[3]) Literally „lungs".

[222]
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VII.

S'ïñ-bū-li uñ-hoñ [1]) *ol-be re to gó s'en,*
Mīl tañ-gum na-lem [2])
Ki-ruñ [3]) *pā-tā uñ-hoñ ol-be re to gó s'en*
Gi-yoñ-taok fa-leñ nam gó mi ya [4])

O! who changed the course of the Singbali [5]) river?
It was the powerful fairy, the sister [6]) who is behind?
O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
It was a powerful like me a *gi-yoñ-taok* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-so kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7]) *lyut só na lé*
Diñ-tam-pāu kom kat bo yel séu yoñ s'ū
S'ïñ mū-yi [8]) *p'i-liñ a-l'oñ ñañ sa gū-lā yo*
Sāk la ma-run-ne loñ la ma-run-ne. [9])

Oh come with me, a little *kar-so* boy to the cross-roads
And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pii* [10]) rupee
Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 *Yuñ-mo tuñ-ceñ hūp ñāu bū*
574 *A-som tup ma-só na-mó*
Hao-dó tuñ-ceñ ok ñāu bū
563 *Ñat-* [11]) *lyut a-som tup so s'a.*

When a Yungmo's door is shut
One cannot find foot to eat
But when his door is wide open
One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1]) *Uñ-hoñ* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *na-lim*.
[3]) Or *Ñi-ruñ*. [4]) Or *yuñ*.
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mil* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'am-ma-ñ*. [9]) Or *Mar-yon-ne*.
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[436] [11]) Or *Ket*.

ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE FOREGOING SONGS.

9.

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[illegible]

2.

[illegible]

3.

[illegible]

4.

[illegible]

5.

[illegible]

6.

[illegible]

[p. 54]

●539
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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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●539
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dong-bong, who is a mountain goddess in the plain. There exist many other variations about the sequence of creation. 773 776

Then Rum made the two rivers, Rong-nyo and Rong-nyit, to flow down from the mountains. They are male and female. In the middle of the female Rong-nyo, he created the rock, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, similar to the navel in the human body. A high mountain, regarded as the navel of the world is a well-known conception in Asia. The goddess, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, is supposed to live on this rock and childless parents pray to her to be blessed with children. The idea of male gods having their abode on the snow-capped mountains and the goddesses in the lakes, is fairly common among the Lepcha. These gods and goddesses are often linked with the first parents in Lepcha mythology.[25]

The sacrificial prayers of the Mun and the Bong thing are often preceded by a legend of creation. The text which we shall later render in detail begins thus :

"Fa dong dju fa dong dō gom shi gom yu rum ! 773
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dō (personal male and female 776
deities) and Gom shi, Gom yu rum (hunting gods). 539
Lyang it ung it lyang sog dōm it
The earth was created, the water was created and the whole world was created.
Chi log so log it
Millet beer and husked rice were created
Lyang tōg bu ta she it ga.
Lyang wife, and Tōg bu ta she's son (man) were created"[26]

Another part reads as follows :

"Ayan na ba lyang ung ma it ma den na ba.
In very ancient times when land and water were not yet created."

An old report has the words :

"Ta she nun rum ayit .....Ta she created the good spirits
Num shim nyo ayit .....He created man.
Lyang ayit .....He created the earth.
Ung ayit .....He created water
Gun pang ayit .....He created all things."[27]

25. Report of Gu-gu Bong thing at Gît biyong.
26. Text of Gu-gu Bong thing.
27. Dictionary of the Lepcha language, op. cit., p. 121 b.

On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miä song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

00. sa hor rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yŭ god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyär pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dzän dong däm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzän dang
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu däm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzän dong hiu däm dong hiu o! ön sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miä song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

776 I offer the smoke of incense. Come hither! To the father and to
755 the mother I offer gold Torma, I offer money Torma; I offer,
762 I offer, I offer incense to San tug kan dro mu; come hither!
I offer incense; come hither! I offer to Chi, the millet beer spirit, to the rice offering spirit, to Dyö, the millet beer spirit; come hither! Verify this, O God, that we are sick. Come hither and tell it; come here and say it. How the head is racked with pain, the loins ache, the body, the hands, the feet are paining and the belly is aching, this O God verify. Come hither and state it. How the demons bite that examine ye gods; come here and tell it. In this manner I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person. As a substitute for the body and the soul I offer this bull. I offer this substitute of life; I sacrifice this bound bull as a substitute for the body. I sacrifice this bound bull to Ge bu."[60a]

[539] 60a. nyom mu (Daughter-in-law of the Supreme God). yab yum pong Father, mother (Tibetan names for the whole family of the God.)

sang blong ga kög ma o! yab yum dyär pa dong
I offer smoke of incense! Come here! To Father, Mother I offer gold Torma.

gom pa dong dzän dong hiu fat ma o
I offer money Torma, I offer! I offer!

San tug kan dro mu sang blong ga kög gad mao.
To San tug Kan dro mu offer of incense! Come here!

plö blong ga kög gad mao!
offer of incense, come here!

chi log so log sang dyö ma djin blong ga
Millet beer (spirit), Rice offer (spirit), Millet beer (spirit) offer!

kög gad mao so yu song dog non rum dyop ga plö buo dön ga
Come here! That we are sick, examine this O God now. Come here and tell us.

plö buo sareb song adyak non
Come here and say it. How the head aches,

achyang dog non me so dog non a go a tong dog
the loins pain, the body pains, hands and feet pain,

ta bak dog a yu rum pong dyop ga plö buo!
the belly aches. O God examine these things. Come here and tell it.

an sareb song mung nöng ttug bang ga rum dyop ga plö buo
How the demons bite examine that ye gods. Come here and tell it.

alom bö mad big djäk chim yu re söm
In this way I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person.

me sö löm sa lo löm big bu
As a body substitute, as a soul substitute I sacrifice this bull.

sok löm bu me sö löm
I sacrifice this substitute of life, as a body substitute

big djäk bu mo Ge bu long big long djäk bu mo.
this bound bull I sacrifice. To the Ge bu, this bull, this bound bull I sacrifice."

765 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of
782 another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa
776 dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation).
The earth was created, the water was created, the whole
world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice
offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created.
Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of
the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this
manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself
I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has
been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation,
so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the
sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods
[774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods; dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gom shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar ngag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö nöng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

mung gung man la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

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[774]

and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness ; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot(bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[539]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung glum rum pong sug ngag la bam
to the water and the flood goods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.

dö dö dzam bi dzam myong rum pong khing tzung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,

ayek alat rum pong dzö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,

ong bon pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life ; if I know how to sacrifice, so

sug yu gong nön dö dö khing tzung go nöng sug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it ; if I do not

nön dö dö a rö a riom plö cho djü la nag yö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know

gong la rum göm
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.

djö la sug ma yö nöng gong na mung göm
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.

dö dö sug la ma yöng gong na mung ni gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.

a lom sog dom ga ayek alat plö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here !

nyö ting sa rum göm go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,

ati adso nong ga su gad shö bu sa yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.

ffö thing ga sing long fat sa yuk gom
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.

go yu son nin sog dom ga chi log so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

755 rice-offerings. Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestors in ancient
782 times did—so do we now. We do not know how to speak in
776 this world; but we have arranged the sacrifice. As this world's life-spirit we, creatures, hold the branches of the Na sö and Na ling trees. We, the sons of Bong-thing, the Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. That is the place to carry the Na sö and Na ling branches which I take consciously. Now I swear an oath to Ta she tak bo thing. Therefore I push a stone into the earth and I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth (as witnesses of the oath). In this place I take the oath. I do it in our own interest. Today, in this very place I take the oath. The paths of the demons are barred. Through the wonderful powers of Ta she tak bo thing I offer this sacrifice. Henceforward we offer a compensation, a bodily substitute: Send no more suffering to this person."[61b]

[39] 61b. Fat bam a re a thing a nö sa dal thing gung dö si syit
Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestor did since ancient times,
plö nöng sug bam
so we also perform the sacrifice.
sog döm lyang ga go yusöng dön ma hön go yu rum
In this world we do not know how we should speak. We have arranged
tek so sog
the sacrifice (rum, god, has also the meaning of sacrifice). As this
döm löng ming tang ga son chio nin cho sa liang ga na sö na ling
world's life spirit we, creatures, hold here branches of the Na sö and Na ling
nom bong thing köb
trees (similar to the Nepalese Panisage and Sau tree). We, Bong-thing sons,
bong thing la mi köb nöng ga sog döm ga
we, Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. Here in this place carrying
na sö na ling nom hö nöng go taam nöng ga.
the Na sö na ling branches, I take hold of them consciously.
ta she tak bo thing riak to long tsog.
To Ta she tak bo thing I swear an oath. I push a stone into the earth.
bu tsum bu yak to nön
I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth. (This ceremony takes place at the swearing and oath taking, so that the oath is sworn over the stone and the bamboo, which are placed side by side.)
sog döm riak to sön tön do ga
Here in this place I take the oath. In our own interest I do it.
sa rong sa ni riak are to nön sog döm ga
Just today I take the oath here. Thus here in this place
mung sa lom chat are tak bo she thing sa
the demons' ways are barred. Now through Tak bo she things' wonder-
a dyän sa löm nöng to Along ren me sü löm
powers, I bring this sacrifice. From now on, a bodily substitute, a
sa lö löm bo son areka gi dök ma hin
compensation we give. Send no more suffering to this person."

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. 782
Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, 776
however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim 773
that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner :

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyö. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[62] The world of the

62. "Fiang it dyö it
Chi's genesis, Dyö's intoxication genesis ! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked on as female ; dyö is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different than millet, and is looked on as a male). [539]

lung tän o ba nang plö — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plö
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

Sang log pair of trees originated ! (Several holy trees are known. Na-sö and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sö-brio. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altag. The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

sög döm tam ga — son sa dän dog ga rum fig rum plö
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing sa a dyän rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tän
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing hob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tän plö
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — ung it — yang ming yang song !
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

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782 demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving
776 and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the
[773] tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grand-
children, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act.
Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner
[688] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart.
But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears,
gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of
good things. If we do not know how to act in the right
manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be
angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased
always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God,
the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god,
Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures,
perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the
rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of
abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[539] 62a. to pong sa lung tän rong köb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
döm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön ga tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin köb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top chio. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la söm du chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la sum kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog döm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dö do nior myu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

If we accomplish a great amount of work in our fields we shall 782
obtain an abundance of things. Darmit (god) will always 776
grant us a happy destiny. If the lines in our foot and palms are worn out through much work, we shall obtain an abundance of things. If you do not understand how to work, you will not obtain the fruits of blessing. We honour Dar by an adoration of God. I shall perform this work until I sweat blood. Thus I work. A handful, a finger-tip-ful of the sacrifice is offered to the gods of procreation in the other life. Take it, O God, as many sacrifices. These are the fruits of the earth. All people together offer rice. When we sacrifice, many should do it together. That is the right way. God will then be at peace. But if we do not do it, then the gods of procreation will be displeased with us. We, living this life, must eat and work. If we do not work, God will not love us. The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.[82b]

82b. ayot top chio — dö do king tzum darmit na la go chio [539]
we shall obtain abundance. — A good fate, Darmit god will always grant us.

dyang dzum — gö dzum — säd dyet sug gan za — ayot top chio
If our foot and hand-lines are all worn out through much works, we shall obtain abundance.

sug ma gön na mong — gong nö chiu
If you do not understand how to work you will not obtain

lop apot ma top na — rum za chiong — dar sö chiong
the fruits of blessings. — As adoration of God we honour Dar.

siot sug vi oi flet nöng ga — sug bö nang yug sug
I will do this work till I sweat blood. — Thus I work.

mö tsö a ping ga — ayek rum ga — go ri go chion dza
In the other life to the gods of procreation, a handful, a fingertipful

apöt — rum ga blad nom pö tat chio
of the sacrifice is offered. — God, take it as many sacrifices.

apot sog dam are ga bam — mang sa min de pö nöng
The fruits of this earth are of this kind. — All people together offer rice.

sa hö töng sa sug lang adyap — do sug gad gang na
When we sacrifice, then many should do it together. — Then is it right.

rum na la — ago ni chio — sug ma gön na
For God it will then be peace. — If we do not do it, then will the

ayek alat rum na la ga yum hium non ne. — tsö are ga bam ha sug la yo sam
gods of procreation be displeased with us. — We, living in this life,

la yong gad chio — sug la ma yu na — gang la rum na la
must work and eat. — If we do not work, then God will

a go ma mad ni rum pum thing hö do sa dön ga — löd nan chiong ta tsäd djö
never love us. — The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will [761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[62c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who [784] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 62c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tzäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tzäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe plö lad chiang gam anam anom ahöb ason
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom li ma top sag ni rum sa sag ni tag nam che lat nan
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's
592 community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others —until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable know-
[824] ledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[551] [7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Panung-mu (woman from Panung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

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601 'mother', 'elder brother', 'elder sister', 'younger brother-or-sister,' 'child' and 'grandchild'. It does not matter how many brothers and their wives live together; all the brothers are called 'father', all their wives 'mother' by all the children; if it is necessary to distinguish which 'mother' or 'father' is meant, the child will say 'big mother', 'little mother', and if necessary 'middle mother'; his own mother he will call his 'real mother'. If the married brothers live in different houses the children of the younger brother will still call the elder brother and his wife 'father' and 'mother'; but the sons of the elder brother will call the younger brother 'uncle', and his wife 'potential spouse' (*azong*), for, as will be seen later, they may under certain circumstances inherit her.

The Lepchas count descent nine generations back on the father's side, and at least four on the mother's; a person with whom you share a common ancestor on the paternal side nine generations back is addressed in the same way as your real brothers and sisters, and their parents as though they were the brother and sister-in-law of your father. In theory a person should always be given the correct title reckoning back to this common ancestor, without regard to the relative age of the two people, but when the situation becomes too ridiculous the terms are modified. For example the co-wives of Lumba *chithembu* were 'grandmother' and 'grandchild' (the first wife was the grandchild of a younger brother, the second wife the great-great-grandchild of an elder sister) though there was only nine years difference in their ages; but the younger wife called the elder 'mother', because calling her 'grandmother' made her appear too old. Similarly Tafoor had a half-sister Pankek who was younger than his own children: he therefore told his children to call her by her name until she grew up, as the proper term for an aunt, *a-nyou*, is a very respectful one, and would be brought into ridicule if given to a little girl of six.

● 551 Except in the case of very young children people are almost always referred to by the proper kinship terms, or by their ecclesiastical or lay titles. Women are practically never named after marriage; they are referred to firstly as their husband's wife, and, as soon as they have borne a child, as their child's mother. Occasionally they are referred to as the inhabitants of the village they were born in. Only occasionally do childless widows start using personal names again. I know the names of very few women in Lingthem, and that is not because of bashfulness on my part or

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

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551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law
784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than
[576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger
602 brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *aʔong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say
only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying
in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near
the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake,
however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep
soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little
butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered
rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round
the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as
the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time
as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby
will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the
third day after its birth. People do not make any remark
on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to con-
gratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remark-
ing upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual
insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on
these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is con-
sidered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence.
It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three
days following the birth of her child, but after this she may,
if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes
her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier
field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth
the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form
of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps
also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them)
it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the
192 mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes
in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes
marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the
choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
● [531] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the
father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all
the tribal groups (*a-git*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no signi-
ficance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Worm-
wood mother' (*Tak-hel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with
wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which
lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-
sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field
mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the
Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*)
used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of
Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character,
may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ran-min*' and
'*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the
fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with
the same meaning as Tibetan '*go*', (goa) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give
the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to
'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the
world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally
the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in
the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that
some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as
'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting
question will be pursued by philologists.

The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little
776 description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and
the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 88); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. [262] Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name.
846 This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the
846 husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not
862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[554] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake, however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the third day after its birth. People do not make any remark on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to congratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remarking upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is considered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence. It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three days following the birth of her child, but after this she may, if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them) it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

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If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848 closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595 case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848 able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842] even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553] secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753] of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

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itself is made of wood, plaster, bamboo and thatch. All buildings have their entrance to the east and face north; the north-south sides are the longest. The first portions of the building to be erected are the five upright supports, one in the centre and one at each corner; they consist of roughly shaped tree-trunks. For the erection of these supports and for the building of the stone wall an overseer is necessary; for the rest of the building no director is used. The floor is usually woven bamboo, but some of the richer people cover the bamboo with smoothed planks; the walls are always of bamboo covered with plaster, occasionally with wooden supports. Except in the Mandal's house, where there are a couple of window frames, the south and west walls are blind; the entrance, which is reached by a pair of notched logs or rough steps, is always on the east; and round the east and north side runs a balcony of plaited bamboo. The north wall is mostly open to the balcony but there are usually wooden shutters which can be closed when the nights are cold. The balcony is used a great deal; for gossiping in the daytime or during warm evenings, for a great variety of household tasks, since there is seldom much light inside the house, as a place where fowls can roost, and as a latrine for infants, invalids, the drunk or the lazy. The roof is made of reeds hung over bamboo and supported on a wooden frame; the north and south sides of the roof cover the whole space between the roof-tree and the top of the wall, but the east and west sides are somewhat inserted at a slightly lower angle, so that there is a triangle (either empty or filled with widely-woven bamboo) on the east and west sides under the roof-tree which is meant to provide ventilation and an escape for the smoke; the device is not very successful and often of an evening I was half-blinded by smoke so that I could not see across a room and the tears streamed down my face. The Lepchas are completely inured to this atmosphere and could not understand why I coughed and choked.

The great majority of Lepcha houses consist of two rooms and an attic; a few of the poorest have only one room, and a couple of the biggest houses have a third small store-room beyond the *dé-ong*. The first room on entering from the east is the *thop-song*, or, as I shall refer to it in future, the kitchen. Round the side are either slightly raised shelves or a bar set into the wooden floor, which marks the sleeping places of the members of the household. During the day the bedding and pillows are rolled up and put away in boxes and are only brought out just before retiring to sleep. Except

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[352] 342 for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; [354] this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen [353] there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously [554] with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is [251] used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

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186 The Lepchas are remarkably tolerant. They are perfectly ready to admit the validity for other peoples of habits and customs which for them would be shocking or disgusting. For example the marriage arrangements of the Nepali, and some of the sexual habits of the Tibetans would be horrifying and disastrous if committed by Lepchas; the Lepchas know of these habits, and are inclined to laugh at them; but they do not reproach the Nepali or Tibetans for them, do not try and convince them that they are wrong, and do not fear moral contamination through contact with them. This tolerance is not accompanied however by any feelings of inferiority; the very strong sentiment of fundamental equality among individuals is carried over to a sentiment of fundamental equality between groups. Some people are richer, more industrious or cleverer than their neighbours; similarly the Tibetans are more learned and the Europeans richer than the Lepchas; but since the Lepchas are as learned and as rich as they can be, they do not, I think, feel any fundamental inferiority in comparison with more favoured groups, any more than they do in comparison with more favoured individuals. It is worth remembering in this connection how Gongyop in his prophetic dreams under the possession of Padem *rum* would visit the rulers of neighbouring states and Europeans and would be treated by them as an equal. It is noteworthy that the richer households and the learned lamas who can read do not, [554] except when the lamas are performing their special functions, demand or obtain any special preferential treatment.

[152] This tolerance of the Lepchas can be ascribed I think partly to contentment, and partly to indifference. Straightforward consumption—food, drink and sex—fills the forefront of their desires and aims in life; provided these physical needs are satisfied—and for the majority they are continuously satisfied—the other aspects of life are emotionally of less importance. In their dealings with the supernatural they are particularly tolerant and receptive; it is important to be able to deal with the devils but they have not any deep-set preference for one special method of dealing with them. Completely alien methods will be tried, and, if they prove satisfactory, adopted, however little they may be integrated into their general outlook; thus they have accepted the taboo on menstruating women in the treatment of cardamum, and retained the insistence on virginity in the sacrifices to the people of Mayel, though except in these instances virginity is a meaningless concept and menstruating women suffer under no disabilities. This capacity of accepting

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scarf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
good horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
of your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well also. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied behind them, and they should be made to walk. Officers should be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken harness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and obliged to fly, they should not be reprimanded, but they should not be rewarded or receive any presents, even though the leader be a great man. The prisoners should receive what is necessary for subsistence, and also expenses for religious ceremonies, and men of rank should be treated well and with consideration.

"A man can only make a treaty for himself and his own descendants."

Concerning murder.

"The price for killing a gentleman who has 300 servants, 671
or a superintendent of a district, or a lama professor, is 300 682
to 400 gold srang. For full lamas, Government officers, and 554
gentlemen with 100 servants the fine is 200 oz. of gold.

"For killing gentlemen who possess a horse and five or six servants, or working lamas the fine is 145 to 150 oz. of gold.

"For killing men with no rank, old lamas, or personal servants the fine is 80 oz. of gold.

"For killing common people and for villagers the price is 30 to 40 oz. of gold.

"For killing a man who has done good work for Government the fine is 50 to 70 oz. of gold.

"For killing unmarried men, servants, and butchers the price is 30 gold srang; and for killing blacksmiths and beggars, 10 to 20 oz. of gold.

"On the price being paid a letter must be written and a 671
copy given to each party saying that everything has been 682
settled. If a case is reopened a fine must be paid by him who opens the case. The murderer must write to the effect

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[326] from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
[435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line. Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
[554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised man.

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587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 584 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 585 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the 823 spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral 766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and [756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[10] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭk nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

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286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty [556] of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [592] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

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224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their [439] gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphro- [178] disiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching [223 small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the 857] commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two cate-
311 gories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha household depended on the energy of its members and on the
● 556 proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

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misfortune. Today this is not quite so true; the creation of permanent fields requires the renunciation of immediate good for future benefits, for the household which builds these fields will not be able to get as large a harvest as would otherwise be possible. The consequence is that the difference between the richest and the poorest in the community has somewhat increased, and that households which have a proportionately larger number of working adults to dependents are in a temporarily favoured position. So of course is the Mandal,[1] who can use the free labour to which he is entitled to have terraces made for him.

Up to the present as far as I can tell this new state of affairs has made no important difference to the Lepcha community; their habits of co-operation nullify the differences in wealth. One man even went so far as to say that he would not like to be the richest person in the community, unless everybody else was equally prosperous, as he would have to give all his superfluity to help others. Extra wealth carries with it extra duties; and in point of fact the richest people in Lingthem were also the most heavily indebted. At the same time it must be emphasised that it is the desire of every Lepcha to be rich; when I asked children what they would most like to be, a clever man, or a learned and respected lama, or a great hunter, or a rich man, they would one and all plump for being rich. Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, a member of the most devout lamaist family in Lingthem, and who was himself starting his religious instruction said 'I should like to go and study religion in a Tibetan monastery, but I don't want to go to the State school at Gangtok; the things they teach you there are quite useless, while a lama always gets good presents and feasts. Why, when a rich man dies even the *kané*, the accolyte attending the officiating lama, is given a fine plate and cup and clothes!'[2]

Unless the whole orientation of Lepcha life is changed even greater differences in actual wealth will not fundamentally alter the situation, for there is no possibility of any Lepcha, however rich, exploiting his neighbour, however poor. Help in the work of house or field is always repaid by equivalent help; the most

[1] See Chapter Five, p. 128.

[2] Chimpet's view of the value of secular education is not shared by his father or the other more serious adult members of the community. They have petitioned the State to establish a boarding school in Zongu, for they consider that the extra work entailed by the older children's absence would be counterbalanced by the value of the education received.

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556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 537 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[42] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
124 their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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has at least a couple of terraces and some considerably more. These terraces are scattered all over the valley, and it is rare for two contiguous strips to belong to the same owner. It is theoretically permissible to exchange plots so that they shall be better grouped, but nobody considers doing so.

The rice terraces are turned with a rough single-pointed wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen, as is the *sing* or field-garden near the house. Except on these artificially levelled places the ground is too precipitous for the use of a plough to be possible. Two main crops are raised in the field-garden annually; first a mixture of barley and wheat, and subsequently maize. These grains are chiefly raised as stop-gap crops, and for fermenting; maize is thought little of, and to eat much of it is the surest sign of poverty. A number of fruits and vegetables are also raised on the edge of the field-garden to give a variety of flavourings to the main rice dish; the greater number of these are importations from India, such as various varieties of pulse, tomatoes and chilli; some of them however are wild plants found locally and domesticated; such are various lavatera, arums and alliums. The collection of some of these wild plants have some ritual attached to them; the allium *safyou* for example, which is only found in one place, must be dug up with sharpened sticks; if knives are used the supernatural Jamfi *moong* will be angry and throw sticks at the collectors and cause hail and thunder. Even more unpleasant is the mountain plant *chok-li bi* (probably a sort of rhubarb) which is said to be delicious; however you gather that plant hail will fall as the stems are picked.

Cardamum is grown in small clearings all over the lower slopes of the valley. It is a perennial plant propagated by cuttings which are taken in the early spring; the plant reaches its full bearing period within three years; at the end of ten years it starts to decline and new plantings have to be made; this can however be done on the same ground as the plant does not exhaust the soil. The plants need a good deal of care, and have to be hand-weeded at least three times a year, for the buds and fruit form close to the ground. When the fruit is gathered the old growth is cut down and burned. Cardamum plants are a favourite hiding-place for snakes. For the Lepchas cardamum is a foreign importation from Nepal; they always refer to it by its Nepali name—*elaiji*—and with the cultivation of the plant has come a whole complex of alien beliefs and ritual. Nothing is done when the

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of cooking dishes and compounding the various ingredients; but on the whole the material provided is of more importance than the cooking. Except that a meal with meat is universally preferred to one without there does not seem to be any particularly favourite food; Tafoor voiced the general opinion when he said his favourite dish was *chi*. I did not get enough detailed menus to be able to state with certainty how often meat is usually eaten inside the household; from such information as I have got I should say richer people eat it three or four times a week, poor people once or twice. When it is available it is eaten in the morning and evening. 262

Lepcha diet is relatively monotonous, notably less highly spiced than the food of the Nepali or Indians; there are no devices for tempting jaded palates; food is to satisfy hunger, and enough is as bad as a meal. A feast definitely implies over-eating, and it is quite a common subject among old people to deplore that their powers of over-eating are failing; that once upon a time they could eat fourteen pounds of meat in a day, and now they cannot manage four with comfort! These actual figures were used by Adér, who is well over seventy and has lost half his teeth.

As can be seen, the Lepchas have, for a primitive people, a remarkably high standard of living, as far as food and drink is concerned; it is certainly far higher than that of the Lepchas outside Zongu or any of the neighbouring peoples that I know of. Levelling out the answers I have received and my own observations, I should say that the average consumption of grain annually by an adult Lepcha is about 400 lbs.; besides that about another 300 lbs. is consumed for *chi*. These quantities naturally do not allow for entertainment or gifts. There are three households who perhaps do not quite reach this standard, those of Dunbi, Nahyeun and Pargeut. Dunbi is said to be the poorest man in the village, but this is chiefly his own fault, for he sits about drinking and gossiping instead of working. Nahyeun is a young man fairly recently married; he is reputed to be Dunbi's bastard and is himself not over energetic. He recently married Tobgé's sister and they have set up house on their own because his wife did not agree with the two wives of Asang, with whom he formerly lived; they consequently have no reserves and few permanent fields. The third poor man, Pargeut, is really unfortunate; he has six small children of which only the two eldest are of an age to help him, and they are girls betrothed outside the village; he has also a very 511 [262] [556]

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511 old mother to support, and he suffers himself from some sort of recurrent fever.

These households, and a few others, may get short of grain in the early summer and be driven to look for food in the forest to supplement the gifts they get; most households have usually a a small surplus at the end of the year which they use for extra feasting and presents. From the point of view of crops, though not [556] necessarily of money, the richest householders are the Mandal, Tafoor, Takneum *youmi*, Tingkep and Chelim. The first two are considered to be the best hosts, at whose house the finest food and drink is obtained.

V

231 Although of secondary importance as far as diet is concerned, domestic animals play a considerable rôle in the life of the Lepchas. Nearly all the ceremonies of the Mun demand animal sacrifices; animals are essential for the socio-religious celebrations of birth, marriage and death; and consequently people with few or no animals who get ill or have children or marry or die are at a considerable disadvantage and have to borrow animals for these ceremonies. Much of the indebtedness incurred with money lenders has been for the purchase of animals. Though the Lepcha can, and often does, borrow animals from his neighbours, he appears to feel a discomfort in being indebted to a friend which he does not feel towards the money lenders.

[556] By far the most important animal is oxen;[7] they are still the chief sign of wealth and a person with twenty head of cattle is considered a rich man. Their meat is the most esteemed and at important feasts, or if a person wants to make a display, it is always an ox which is killed. They are never used as beasts of burden (no animals are so used) but occasionally for ploughing; a certain amount of milk and butter is got from milch-cows. Only the most savage bulls are castrated. Cows are not mated and no pedigrees are kept.

Except for young calves, milch cows, and bullocks temporarily in use for ploughing, the animals are never tethered or herded; they wander all over the common land round the village where pasturage and wood-gathering are free; every evening they

[7] The Lepcha cattle have no hump; they resemble small European rather than Indian cattle. They have small horns and every variety and combination of colouring.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions.

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest.

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects.

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the

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exclaiming: 'May that man die!' Whenever Nariya went to visit her she used to throw stones at him to drive him away. It was said that she was carrying on a love affair with a Nepali in her distant village. On one occasion the girl's parents came to Lingthem, but Nariya was too shy to say anything. At the end of April Tempa said that he threatened the parents that if they did not send the girl he would apply to the police station. He explained that he spoke after consultation with the Mandal because Nariya's uncle Ashyok had not enough sense.

On May 11th, 1937, Nariya went to fetch his wife home; on May 17th she returned with him but bringing with her a younger brother aged twelve to sleep with her as a chaperone. On May 18th she went away again to Mangan to see her father, but she returned still accompanied by the younger brother on May 20th. On this day took place one of the bi-monthly monastery feasts and Nariya's wife took this opportunity to become formally introduced into the village community. Although she still did not sleep with her husband she seemed to be settling down and was helping in the preparations for the big annual feast of Boom koor which was to take place three days later, helping with the cooking and so on. She did not talk much but sat about quite comfortably in the groups where people made rather a fuss of her. All the time she kept some small child by her, either her own younger brother or Pankek, a little girl of six. She seemed to find comfort in the presence of young children. Tobgé was familiar with her, hugging her and feeling her breasts, but she showed no resentment. She had on a clean new green blouse but a filthy dirty skirt. The general belief was that in a day or so Nariya would succeed in sleeping with her and that then the marriage would settle down completely and happily.

Nariya it is true was not a very attractive character. He had an extraordinarily high-pitched almost eunochoid voice and a slightly sly expression. He was an orphan; his father, when he lived, was the richest man in Lingthem and a great deal of the wealth in cattle had been expended on the funeral feasts for him and many other relations of his generation who had died very close to one another. Nariya wished to regain his father's wealth and was therefore, most exceptionally for a Lepcha, engaged in strenuous economies, spending as little as he could, except when he had to give feasts, on clothes or food; he was rather secretive.

[556]

Of the other recently married men Rigya, Nariya's cousin and

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- [826]
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their [842]
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- [556]
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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764 loops on the circumference[4] and NI in Tibetan script inscribed in the middle. On this is set a bamboo *patyoot* about a cubit high
778 and a little broader than that usually employed for *chi* drinking, with a rupee in the bottom and filled with grain; into this is stuck an upright bamboo of the height of the corpse when sitting and at shoulder height is an inserted cross-piece the width of the dead person's shoulders. On top of this is placed a piece of paper supported on a square stretcher: this is stamped with a die representing a divine face; it is the same for all ages and conditions, but different for each sex; it is inscribed with the name of the dead person. Then this dummy is clothed with the clothes of the dead person so arranged as to look as if it was sitting with the legs crossed and feet hidden and hands folded. A big scarf which has to be borrowed or bought for the occasion is draped from the image's behind up the back and over the face, so that the paper mask is hidden.

This image is placed in the *dé-ong* facing the lamas, who sit on the right of the altar; in front of the image are three tables. On the first table are seven small cones of rice, seven *chimi*, two pots of water and two pots of rice; on the second table is a plate and cup and all sorts of food; on the third are the dead person's jewels, if it was a woman, or the knife and bow-and-arrows if a man. A little to the left before the first table is a *patyoot* of *chi*; behind and a-so to the left must sit the Mourner—the surviving spouse if there is one, or failing that any near relation. The Mourner only has to be present when the image is given food or talked to. Except right at the end other ordinary people do not come into the *dé-ong*.

764 If the dead man was a lama all the lamas of the neighbourhood will come automatically; if he was a layman only two are necessary, a Dorjé Lapoon and a *kané*. Old and experienced men are allowed to sit with the lamas. A certain number of nuns with their prayer-wheels are necessary; they sit against the wall opposite the altar.

[556] The length of the ceremony depends on the wealth of the deceased. If he was a poor man it will only last twenty-four hours; if he was rich, up to seven days. The *chi* offered to the corpse is changed three times daily, the food twice; each meal must have some meat in it and also tea, rice and all vegetable foods. When the meal

[4] There would seem to be a connection between this nine-looped circle, and the nine-handled cup used in the ritual to expel Shidook *moong*, but I could not learn what this connection is.

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X159 She was the same year as me; it was my first time but I don't think it was hers. Afterwards my parents wanted to *asék* her but she was already bespoke. Next I was *asék* to another girl, but we didn't get on together and later the Mandal arranged for the *asék* to be broken. Finally I was *asék* to my present wife.[7] For the first two or three years we used to dislike one another very much; when she saw me she used to exclaim: "May this boy die young!" This always happens when the parents arrange a marriage between two people who don't know one another. Even when she came to live with me we slept apart at first; I tried to copulate with her but she pushed me away, and I was afraid to use force because she might beat me. But everybody gave her advice and presents—money and clothes and jewels—my parents and the Mandal and the other women in the village. At first we couldn't even look at one another, but now we're friendly; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me, and I love her and think in my belly "This is my wife," and I am pleased.

X159 ● 556 'Nariya's father was the richest man in the neighbourhood—richer than the Mandal—but much money was lost over a lawsuit concerning Nariya's first wife, the girl from Lingmu. The girl was a wicked girl who slept with everybody; and when she ran away she stole Rs. 150 in cash as well as taking her clothes and jewels; and her father borrowed Rs. 120 from Nariya's father and never paid it back. Besides these losses the lawsuit cost Nariya and the girl's father Rs. 200 each. Before that time he had had sixty head of cattle; the girl ruined him. The girl when alone used to live on the fat of the land, killing hens, and so on, for herself.

'Nariya's cardamum amounts to 15 maunds, mine to 20, and my wife's to 5 maunds. Nariya has eleven oxen, I five, and my wife none. Many oxen were killed because no less than seven people died in the house, and an ox was killed for each *sanglion* and also for the memorial feast a year later. Also my marriage cost three oxen; one was given for *asék*, instead of the two pigs, and two at the marriage. It is good to have plenty of cattle because then for ceremonies and so on you are completely independent and do not have to borrow; also you can sell butter to the kanya at Mangan who pay from Rs –/8 to Rs. 1 for 2 lbs.

'None of us owe a penny to the kanya, nor indeed except for some meat from neighbours, an anna to anybody else. We are

[7] Who had been formerly *asék*'d to his two brothers. See Chapter Six, p. 157.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

all three, saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the kanya and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.'

ii

An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls.

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chōtembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopōn. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chōtembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243
"dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields), millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177] introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans, one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of terraces for growing rice under water entails very considerable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157] indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat. Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556] wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243 this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157 however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling, although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels [556] are bought ready-made. They are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the [542] present century. Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated 342 and irregular. Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 542 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would count as incestuous. Another reason is the cultural concept that there is no temperamental difference between men and women; except that men are usually stronger physically identical standards of behaviour are expected from both sexes; the standards of beauty are identical; except that they may not kill animals nor perform lamaist ceremonies nor own land women suffer under no disability because they are women. With this general conception of the similarity of the two sexes the differences of appearance and function of the primary sexual characteristics becomes even more striking and worthy of comment; and it is worth noting again in this context the extraordinary amount of fantasy about the independent life of the genitalia which occurs in the Lepcha stories. It is also possible that in removing all intense emotion from sexual activity the Lepchas have also destroyed some of the emotional release and psychological satisfaction.

Some of the young men were particularly given to obscenity, particularly Tobgé, a ne'er-do-well whose wife, it will be remembered, was carrying on with Dadool, and Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother. Chudo was twenty-nine, the father of three children, and very fond of his wife. He always gave the impression of being very much younger than his years; he was particularly sweet-tempered, even for a Lepcha, and very industrious, but he was extremely childish, perhaps because his elder brother, Tafoor, was so very learned and responsible. He had rather a grotesque sense of humour and was very fond of imitating lamaist dances, almost parodying them, and of making surprising jokes and unexpected little presents. When he learned I was fond of flowers he used to bring me nearly every day some orchid or other odd flower that he had found in his work travelling about the country-side. If the younger men were more inclined to obscenity so were the elder women, particularly Lumba's first wife, a Mun aged forty-seven, who was completely outrageous and shameless in her speech and behaviour; she was a jolly bawdy old creature, rather in the tradition of Marie Lloyd. As far as my information goes, and on such matters it is very extensive, she was relatively chaste in her private life; nobody repeated any scandal about her. When I talked to women about sex and childbirth and similar subjects the older ones used always to answer quite freely; but occasionally if there was a young woman in the group, she would ask why I talked about such things which made her feel ashamed; if this happened the older women would usually stop the conversation, giving

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

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After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But the settled areas of British India have an expensive British administration, for which, in the last instance, the peasant has to pay. This is not to deny, of course, that he gets certain benefits in return: good roads, schools, hospitals, and so on; but these are of more use to people who have already reached the higher economic levels. In the meantime the small tenant cultivator is forced to sell his own rice in order to pay his taxes, not to mention expensive litigation, which seems to increase steadily as conditions become ever more "settled." It seems all wrong to me.

* * * * *

Both men and women work in the fields, and there is no hard-and-fast division of labour between the sexes, although the heavier work is done mostly by men. Woman, as such, is an inferior being, but only because the Lamaist doctrine says so. "Even Buddhist nuns, excepting the very few so-called incarnations of celestial Bodhisats, are given an inferior position scarcely higher than lay devotees"; and to be born as a woman is a definite step backwards in the march towards Nirvana, the freedom from reincarnation, which is the goal of all true Buddhists. But this idea is completely foreign to the Lepcha, who does not recognise any inherent distinction between the temperament of the sexes; there is with them practically no such thing as "men's work" and "women's work."

Dr. Margaret Mead was the first to point out that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced. Two of the tribes she studied in New Guinea had "no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious rôles, different skills, different vulnerabilities to evil, magic and supernatural influences. The Arapesh believe that painting in colour is appropriate only to men, and the Mundugumor consider fishing an essentially feminine task. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability are inalienably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

associated with one sex (as opposed to the other) is entirely lacking. This may seem strange to a civilisation which in its sociology, its medicine, its slang, its poetry, and its obscenity accepts the socially defined differences between the sexes as having an innate basis in temperament and explains any deviation from the socially determined rôle as abnormality of native endowment or early maturation. . . .

"The knowledge that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced is congenial to every programme that looks forward to a planned order of society. It is a two-edged sword that can be used to hew a more flexible, more varied society than the human race has ever built, or merely to cut a narrow path down which one sex or both sexes will be forced to march, regimented, looking neither to the right nor to the left. It makes possible a Fascist programme of education in which women are forced back into a mould that modern Europe had fatuously believed to be broken for ever. It makes possible a Communist programme in which the two sexes are treated as nearly alike as their different physiological functions permit." (*Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1935.)

562 Everything we saw in Jongu bears ample witness to the correctness of her views; and such differences as there are between the sexes are undoubtedly culturally conditioned, no inherent variation in temperament between them being recognised. This will perhaps be more apparent when we come to the subject of marriage.

462 Although we did not collect actual statistics, it is my impression that the Lepcha woman does considerably more physical work than the man. In addition to working all day in the fields, she has to cook, tend the children, and keep the house in order, and is often out searching for fuel: but the man is not above nursing the baby or cooking his meal when necessary. But since so many of the men are Lamas, and in consequence required to spend a great deal of time in the performance of their useless duties, the bulk of the work falls to the women. This is not, however, to relegate them to the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the
position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do 462
not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own [428
other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in 421
the management of the household affairs. 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu 231
Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time 232
to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; 838
nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. [262]
Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain.

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during 231
monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like [552]
all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose.

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
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In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852 ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431 present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852 an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so, and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say
only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying
in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near
the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake,
however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep
soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little
butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered
rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round
the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as
the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time
as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby
will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the
third day after its birth. People do not make any remark
on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to con-
gratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remark-
ing upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual
insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on
these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is con-
sidered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence.
It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three
days following the birth of her child, but after this she may,
if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes
her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier
field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth
the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form
of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing;846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps
also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them)
it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes: "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
114 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who
562 is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 158 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

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VII.

S'ïń-bā-li uń-koń [1]) *ol-bo re to gó s'en,*	O! who changed the course of the Singbali [2]) river?
Mit tań-gum na-lem [3])	It was the powerful fairy, the sister [4]) who is behind?
Ki-ruń [5]) *pā-lā uń-koń ol-bo re to gó s'en*	O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
Gi-yoń-tauk fa-leń nam gó mi ya [6])	It was a powerful like me a *gi-yoń-tauk* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-ro kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7]) *tyet só na lé*	Oh come with me, a little *kar-ro* boy to the cross-roads
Diń-tam-pau kom kat bo yet sāu yoń s'ū	And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pii* [10]) rupee
S'ïń mā-yi [8]) *p'i-liń a-t'oń ńań sa gh-lā yo*	Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
Sāk la ma-run-ne loń la ma-run-ne. [9])	My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

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Yań-me tań-ron hūp ńān bā	When a Yangmo's door is shut
A-som tup ma-só na-ma	One cannot find foot to eat
Hao-dó tań-ron ok ńān bā	But when his door is wide open
Ñot- [11]) *tyet a-som tup so s'o.*	One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1]) *Uń-koń* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *na-lim*.
[3]) Or *Ñi-ruń*. [4]) Or *yań*.
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'am-ma-ū*. [9]) Or *Mar-yun-ne*.
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[436]
[11]) Or *Kot*.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
SiKKiM AK3

declaration that they will not pass the frontiers of Tibet, Bhutan or Nepal; those who break this obligation are liable to imprisonment and punishment if caught.

As far as I can see the State of Sikkim is well and paternally administered; the extremely precipitous nature of the whole country has rendered road-building extremely difficult; but the main mule roads into Tibet are kept up in a good state, and solid bridges have been built on these roads. Sikkim has few natural resources except for some small copper mines in the south and (as far as I could tell, undeveloped) large quantities of mica-bearing stone in the north. Sikkim is strategically important as being on the main road between Tibet and India, and nearly all the trade between the two countries passes through it. The Political Officer, assisted by trade agents inside the Tibetan frontier, overlooks this traffic; he also advises the Maharajah on questions of policy.

Since the middle of the last century Sikkim has been free from war and the fear of war, and its history has been as uneventful and as happy as the poorness of the country allows. The only diversion of a military nature in which Sikkim has been involved was the Younghusband expedition to Lhassa in 1905–06 in which several Sikkimese and Lepchas took part. In recent years there has been so great an immigration of Nepalis into Sikkim that it is probable that in the southern part of the country these invaders outnumber the original inhabitants; laws have been passed prohibiting their settling to the north of certain fixed points, but it is not certain to what extent these laws are enforced.

The pacification of the whole country through the British protectorate has given the Lepchas general security; besides abolishing slave-raiding it has also put an end to the mild peonage which formerly existed among the Lepchas themselves. One day in Lingthem the lama Jiroong, when he was rather drunk, embarked on a widely applauded panegyric of the beneficial influence of the British, and of their confirmation in power of the Maharajah. Before the English came, he said, we Lepchas were harried by Tibetans and Nepali and could not settle anywhere for fear we should be sold as slaves; now we have our homes and can cultivate our crops.

Jiroong himself is the descendant of former slaves. Some generations ago his ancestor, then a small boy, was kidnapped by Bhutanese; but the boy was rescued by the then head of the village

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●567 —Serving's father—and brought up as his peon. Such Lepcha slaves were either the children of slaves, orphans, or the children of very poor parents. A man would bring up such children and they in turn had to serve him all their lives. If the owner got a child on a female slave the child would be treated as his own, and, if a boy, would inherit, though a smaller portion than the legitimate sons. Slaves could only marry slaves, but otherwise were not distinguished by any special treatment; they received religious attention like ordinary people, and could not be sold or transferred. As in all other cases of emotional relationship among the Lepchas, there was no fixed or expected attitude between masters and slaves; if the master was kind, he was loved like a father. There was a fixed limit to the number of slaves one person could own.

A modification of this situation continues today. If there are children with nobody to look after them, as occasionally occurs, the head of the village, the Mandal, will take them into his household. When they are young they work for the Mandal like a servant, but when they grow up the Mandal arranges a marriage for them and they are then independent; there is at no time any coercion.

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177 In some respects the Lepchas are in a different state to most groups hitherto described by anthropologists. A few studies have been made of tribes who have only had contact with other tribes in a similar state of development, but far and away the greater number had already been more or less seriously influenced by Occidental culture, either through colonisation, missionaries, or traders. Sometimes this external modification is taken into account, sometimes practically ignored; in either case the extent and direction of European influence is easily calculable and understandable. The Lepchas on the other hand have not been in any way directly exposed to European colonisation or missionary influence. Except for an occasional tourist to Talung monastery, and the passage of a couple of mountaineering expeditions attempting to climb Kinchenjunga, Europeans have not entered Zongu. A few of the men had seen Europeans prior to our arrival through trading expeditions to Gangtok and Darjeeling, but practically none of the women; they considered us 'amazing,' particularly on account of the colour of our skins and the shape of our noses.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[684] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves
[567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked. 796 781

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chōtembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell. 796 [533 781]

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain. [787]

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be 796 571

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

7% present. Every household was, however, represented, and the
● 57% communal nature of the ceremony was further emphasised by the numerous offerings of grain which, together with the cost of the sacrificial goat, had been contributed by everyone in the village.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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571
415
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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Once the full ceremony has been performed the two *ingʒong* are regarded as being in truth [illegible] of one father, and intermarriage between their descendants is [illegible]dden as incestuous for nine generations. The relationship between one *ingʒong* and his *ingʒong*'s wife is a respectful one, and to mark his respect he will usually address her as 'mother'. It would be almost incestuous to sleep with your *ingʒong*'s wife, but a woman does not have to hide from her husband's *ingʒong* as is the case with the *mit* of Nepal.[2] As a general rule the *ingʒong* relationship is hereditary, the sons of *ingʒong* being themselves *ingʒong*; but there is no compulsion about this and if a son does not get on with his father's *ingʒong* and his sons he can set up new relationships. Even with hereditary *ingʒong* the full ceremonial must be performed in each generation.

Nowadays the Lepchas only set up the relationship with Sikkimese and Tibetans, for the exchange of crops and dye-wood for salt, carpets and metal vessels; they are, they say, no longer friendly with the Nepali and will have no relationships with them. *Ingʒong* is not an exclusive relationship. At the end of March a Sikkimese-Tibetan husband and wife from Lachen arrived in Lingthem with rugs which they wished to exchange for crops, dye-wood and cash. In the whole Talung valley they had eleven *ingʒong*, three of whom were in Lingthem; they spent one night in the house of each. When an *ingʒong* arrives on a visit efforts are made to feast him as well as possible; and when Lepchas go to visit their *ingʒong* they take with them presents of grain, and, if possible, meat. Most of the men of Lingthem have at least three Sikkimese or Tibetan *ingʒong*.

Properly speaking the term *ingʒong* is only applicable to the ceremonial trading-relationship set up between Lepchas and foreigners; but the word is very frequently used between Lepchas with the meaning 'my special friend.' It sometimes happens that two men will drink *chi* together ceremoniously to give some formality to their relationship; but they do not perform the full ceremony for that would entail the nine-generation marriage ban, and in the small community of Zongu, where the choice of wives is already limited, this would speedily produce an impossible state of affairs. It took me a considerable time to straighten out the different implications of the term *ingʒong*, for the word is in constant use,

[2] For this fact and for other details in this book concerning the Nepali I am indebted to information derived from Mr. C. J. Morris, either in conversation or from his book '*Gurkhas*' *Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Delhi 1936).

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

iii

648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Øgen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

512 to visit a girl with whom he has made an appointment, to return home before dawn; but most people sleep heavily after the day's work.

527 Nine days out of ten this represents the normal Lepcha life, for [461] the Lepchas are extremely hard-working and industrious; though they do not work fast they work steadily and for very long hours. But the monotony of working life is continually broken up by feasts and ceremonies; there are the regular bi-monthly monastery feasts, and in most months there are one or more calendrical lamaist festivals; people are born, or marry, or die, or fall ill, and these are all occasions for feasts for the friends and neighbours of the [574] people affected. There is also a continual current of visits; married women return to their native village, taking with them their children or some relative of their husband's; young men go to visit their *asěk*'d bride, accompanied by a friend or relation to help carry the gift; trading partners come on a visit or are visited. All these visits are also occasions for feasts, not so elaborate as the big ceremonial feasts, but a pleasant interruption of everyday routine. The occurrence of feasts varies somewhat with the calendar; they are most frequent in the autumn after the harvests have been gathered and the cardamum sold, and least common in the early summer before the harvest is ripe, when supplies may be running short.

The most regular of all are the bi-monthly monastery feasts, and since, owing to the fact that I was living in the monastery, I was inevitably in the centre of them, it is these gatherings which represent for me the typical Lepcha crowd. At an ordinary feast about eighty or ninety people will be present; occasionally the feast-givers are poor or unpopular and then there are only thirty or forty; and once, when Tafoor was responsible for a bumper feast, there were well over a hundred. About a dozen lamas are seated in the prayer room; six or seven nuns and a considerable number of other women and old men and young children are crowded together on the floor of the small prayer-drum room, the *lha-gong*. Inside the porch, on the right-hand side, is seated the Mandal; next to him is probably Gongyop, as these two are great friends, and the givers of the feast if they are laymen, and strangers and visitors to the village. Outside are probably two cooking places; one to the front of the [262] monastery is fairly small and on it is probably cooking the vegetable 'curry' (*bi*) which is served as a relish to the staple cereal. On the east side there are probably two or three big pots cooking, one

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 777 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 592 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

● 574 431 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring 431
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

[539]

En Ye!	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Mo-tan-chi Ron kap kun non bin	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
So-lā-non po-bong yit duk kan sa	And the *ar-tasm* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tasm po-mig duk kan sa pa-s'er bon	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kang sa Ron kap pam yon s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

---

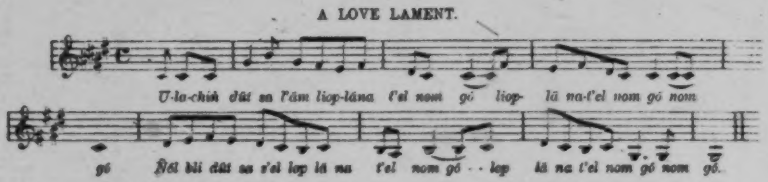
[574] [273] The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUĒ DŪT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la chin dūt sa-l'ām liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñōl-bli dūt sa-s'el „ „ „ „	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Son la lyon s'u fak-ruā „ „ „ „	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer ki-run nak nāk liop-lā dik mit nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tak-kat sa-s'el „ „ „ „ „	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tak-gum dik-mit nom „ „ „ „ „	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'ot ta-bāl-la liop-lā na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'ot nak nān „ „ „ „	Like a sorrowing *S'uā* bird.
Sāk la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Lok la ma run na mo „ „ „ „	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-cho-ns tak-suk buk go ma f'ān sa-gum	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-cho-ns* yam [7])
Kyok-rōa-lo lat dok S-tim-bu lāt nom-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyok-rōa-lo* heart.

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[824] [231] [415] [1]) *Po-cher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poo*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine crocana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poā-f'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poā-his*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *his*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñōl-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Lon-s'u*.

[222] [7]) *Tak-sok-tak* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

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VII.

S'ïñ-bā-li uñ-koñ [1]) *el-bo re to gó s'en,*	O! who changed the course of the Singbali [1]) river?
Mit tañ-gum ma-lem [2])	It was the powerful fairy, the sister [2]) who is behind?
Ki-ruñ [3]) *pā-lā uñ-koñ el-bo re to gó s'en*	O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
Gi-yoñ-tsok fa-lok nam gó mi ya [4])	It was a powerful like me a *gi-yoñ-tsok* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-co kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7]) *tyet só na lé*	Oh come with me, a little *kar-co* boy to the cross-roads
Din-tam-pāu kom kat bo yet sāu yoñ s'ē	And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pii* [10]) rupee
S'ïñ mā-yi [8]) *p'i-liñ a-t'oñ ñañ sa gñ-lā yo*	Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
Sāk la ma-run-ne loñ la ma-run-ne. [9])	My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539
574
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Yuñ-mo tam-ceñ kāp ñān bā	When a Yungmo's door is shut
A-nam tup ma-só ma-mó	One cannot find foot to eat
Hao-dó tañ-ceñ ok ñān bā	But when his door is wide open
Ñat- [11]) *tyet a-som tup so s'o.*	One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1]) *Uñ-koñ* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *ma-lim.*
[3]) Or *Ñi-ruñ.* [4]) Or *yuñ.*
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'am-ma-ō.* [9]) Or *Mar-yon-ne.*
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[11]) Or *Kat.*

[436]

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576 ETIQUETTE--greetings and salutations; obeisances; compliments; concept of courtesy; general patterns of etiquette in eating, drinking, smoking, visiting, and travel; deference to status superiors; noblesse oblige; breaches of etiquette and the resulting social sanctions; etc. See also:

Drinking etiquette 27
Patterned behavior toward kinsmen 60
Sexual etiquette 83
Table manners 204
Postures 516
Polite conversation 521
Sportsmanship 526
Chivalry 642
Intentional impoliteness 578
Informal social control 625
Court etiquette 644
Diplomacy 648
Propitiation 782
Religious ritual 788
Training of children in etiquette 867
Treatment of the aged 898

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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents. 636

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true. [576]

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate 578 626 634

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should
784 never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than [576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young
602 man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *ayong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard, and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and
834 would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait,
576 which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of
793 respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined.

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household.

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all [576] the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As [788] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani- [788] ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

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The return of the *Boom Ker* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[Facing p.291]

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Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents. 636

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true. [576]

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate 578 626 634

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578 626 636

objects. He is one of the very rare people in Lingthem who habitually hits animals. Finally, after he had been Muktair for about six months he assaulted with his stick old Takneum *youmi*, beating him after an argument about a matter of no importance. Immediately after this an agitation was started to get rid of him. The first person to make the discontent vocal was an old man of Tasso, in no way directly connected with either of the parties of the dispute. The Mandals of the five villages consulted together, and then each Mandal held meetings of all the adults where the matter was discussed in the greatest detail; these meetings were held in Lingthem monastery and at the houses of the different Mandals.

While these discussions were taking place, Tempa, though officially the superior of the Mandals, was forbidden by them to be present at any feasts or public gatherings either in the monastery or in private houses. Finally it was decided that so violent and irresponsible a man was unsuitable in a position of authority. A petition signed by all the householders of the district demanded that Tempa be removed from his office; they explained that he was using unjustifiable violence; they said that he was a stranger and did not know their ways; and they requested that the second office of Muktair be abolished and that the Muktair of Gyatong should in future administer their territory also. The Court granted their request, after which Tempa, reduced from all authority to the position of a private householder, was readmitted to the communal feasts and gatherings. No lasting animosity was displayed against Tempa but everybody knows the history and draws the moral; Tempa was angry, but being faced with complete unanimity he could do nothing. Today he is still angry with Takneum *youmi* and the two never visit each other on any occasion; they will, however, eat together in neutral places without quarrelling. This possibility of exclusion is the major Lepcha sanction; the person who is not allowed to feasts and who is not visited, who is in fact 'sent to Coventry' leads a very dull and lonely life; but more than that, if he is not allowed to help other people other people will not help him and it is hard to get through the agricultural and domestic work without help. Similar pressure, it is said, is brought to bear whenever anybody in authority, whether that authority be hereditary or through Court appointment, shows any tendency to abuse his position. It is a most effective control.

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property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam. Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

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627 it will be presumed that this is owing to the malevolent action of a supernatural, and exorcism will be resorted to.

It may happen, however, that the quarrel is of a more serious nature and consists of accusations and counter-accusations. Should such a quarrel break out there is a whole apparatus for patching it up without official notice being taken of it; should the Mandal hear of it in his official capacity, worse still should it go to the Court, it would be a terrible thing; there would be strict punishment and bad blood and that would be a slur on the community.

When a quarrel does break out the *gyapōn* will in the first instance go to both houses to find out the cause of the quarrel, and, if possible, to a third neutral person as witness. He talks diplomatically to both parties, softening each other's version of the incident; if he can make peace in this way all three will drink *chi* together and that is the end of the matter. If, however, the two parties persist in quarrelling (owing to a sense of injury) the *gyapōn* will instruct both parties to prepare *chi* and to have a certain sum of money ready—always considerably larger than what would actually be needed—in order to make the people realise the seriousness of their offence.

Chi takes about eight or nine days to be ready, and while it is brewing the *gyapōn* consults with the *youmi*; they then make another effort to compose the quarrel without calling in the Mandal. The three adjudicators take a statement from each party and then, unless the blame is obviously on one side, they call them together and threaten them that if they do not make peace, they will be very heavily fined (say Rs. 25 from each of them). The sum demanded is calculated to be beyond their reach, so that they beg the *youmi* and *gyapōn* not to proceed further; whereupon the *gyapōn* agrees to be contented with a much lesser sum, say Rs. 2/8 from each, or if they have no money, with a copper vessel or plate or anything of equivalent value. After that the two quarrellers and the three adjudicators eat and drink *chi* together; at the end of the feast the two quarrellers are given a wordy and imposing sermon on the duty of living amicably at peace one with another; at the end of the sermon the fines are returned and the whole matter is at an end.

627 578 In the last three years in Lingthem there have been two serious quarrels. Both of them centred round Mrs. Jiroong; she is Tempa's sister, like him a foreigner to Zongu; she is far more aggressive and has a far more active ego-feeling than the other local-born Lepcha women. The first quarrel was with the wife of the lama

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Datoop whom she accused of seducing her husband; they had two noisy and public quarrels in the guardian's house by the monastery, so that the Mandal was forced to interfere. Mrs. Datoop easily proved her innocence; as a punishment Mrs. Jiroong has been permanently forbidden to enter the monastery compound when feasts are in progress. This effectively cuts her off from the major community relaxations, and incidentally gives her hen-pecked husband, who is a lama and therefore has to be present, an opportunity to escape from her constant scoldings.

627 578

The second quarrel was of a more complicated nature; like the first, it represents an attitude towards sex which is completely alien to the Lepchas of Zongu. The facts are briefly as follows. Jiroong, the youngest son of a very poor family, was married by the Mandal to an old and childless widow (his first wife, since dead) so that he could inherit her property. His eldest brother had a son Tobgé who, on his father's death, gave up his old home, and went with his wife to go and live with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Jiroong never liked Tobgé, whom she considered treated her without sufficient respect; so, to revenge herself, she persuaded Mrs. Tobgé to run away with a young married neighbour named Dadool. To forward the elopement she accompanied Mrs. Tobgé and Dadool on a visit to Mrs. Tobgé's parents who live on the far side of the Teesta beyond Zongu. After they had been absent three days the matter was reported to the *gyapōn*. Before they could take any action however it was learned that Jiroong and Tempa had already gone in pursuit. On their arrival they asked what was the meaning of the escapade, to which the women replied that they had come to see Mrs. Tobgé's family. Tempa and Jiroong were furious at this reply, and, they said subsequently, felt that they could have killed Mrs. Tobgé, whom they considered irresponsible and of a bad character; but the girl had many 'brothers', and they undertook to be responsible for her and to send her home. Dadool returned separately. On their return the Mandal lectured the two young people and told them that they were to live quietly with their own spouses and to behave in future.

Since then Tobgé and Dadool have kept the peace and appear friendly enough; but the enmity between Tobgé and Mrs. Jiroong is stronger than ever, and there is no certainty that the affair will not flair up again. It is known that Dadool and Mrs. Tobgé are still sleeping together for they have been surprised in a field-house, but there is no way of telling if Tobgé himself knows of this.

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627 For a few days Dadool worked for us, fetching fire-wood and water. Jiroong's house is one of the nearest to the monastery.
●578 One night, it was believed, Dadool did not return home, and in the morning his wife was not in the home either. Towards midday a a very serious deputation, headed by Mrs. Datoop and Kurma *gyapön* came and asked us to dismiss Dadool; the proximity of Jiroong's house, it was felt, put temptation in his way. The situation was discussed very seriously in low and distressed voices; it was not, as similar circumstances would probably be with us, a rather spicy piece of scandal—for the people involved were in no way directly related—but the threat of impending general unpleasantness. If Mrs. Dadool had gone to complain to her 'brothers' there would be a considerable upset; they would send their *bek-bu* (marriage go-between) to the Mandal, who had been Dadool's *bek-bu*, to say 'You persuaded us to consent to this marriage, and now see what has happened.' If this occurred the Mandal would have to inflict two fines of Rs. 5/– each on Mrs. Tobgé which she would have to pay to Mrs. Dadool, and Dadool would have to pay Rs. 5/– to Tobgé. Fortunately on this occasion their apprehensions were not realised; Dadool turned up in the afternoon with a reasonable account of how he had spent the previous evening; and later in the day his wife returned from Mangan, whither she had gone to buy cigarettes.

The whole situation is a good illustration of Lepcha attitudes. Normally sexual intercourse would not be the subject of serious conversation at all, though it might be joked about; and it seems probable that without Mrs. Jiroong's continual encouragement the affaire would have lapsed long ago, for Dadool appears fond of his wife and contented. But a quarrel or dispute is a menace to everybody's happiness; half the pleasure is lost from a feast if there is a feeling of discomfort in the air. For the Lepchas quarrelling is not natural or inevitable, but a deplorable accident which it is everybody's business to stop.

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

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Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils Soo-*moong* (enmity of speech), Gé-*moong* (enmity of thought) and Thor-*moong* (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity Soo-gé-thor is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead. 796 578

First of all a very large image of the supernatural Thorgyop *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of Soo-gé-thor and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block[7] on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan 'we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man'. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs. 796 [532]

Another image is made of Soo-gé-thor, this time recumbent and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures. [532]

Finally a third image called Sor-so-mu is made; this is a three-sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to [532]

[7] A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year 'animal' cycle.

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186 and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The 781 Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

157 Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

[578] This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper
[531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other
•[578] person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

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Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582]
living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to cooperate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578 ●
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

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these is jealousy. The first thing to determine is the biological status of jealousy. Is it an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy human mind? Or is it the fruit of a convention which can be changed? No change in convention is going to remove the hunger problem, or even the more sublimable sex problem. Does jealousy rank with these? The answer is, yes and no. I believe that nine-tenths of all jealousy manifested by wives and by husbands and by lovers is but a conventional perversion of the instinct of fear; and this fear arises from the taking for granted of the monogamic tradition, as though it were in accordance with instinct and with right. Yet monogamy, except during those short periods of 'being in love,' is, for live people, the merest convention."

Having myself grown up in a culture in which jealousy is closely connected with sex and marriage I found it difficult at first to realise that this feeling is definitely not "an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy mind." And yet there is little doubt that this is the case. It may be argued that the evidence from a single primitive tribe is no evidence at all, but this is tantamount to saying that ethnology has no practical value. It should be remembered, however, that since our own society has grown so complicated it is only in the examination of primitive peoples that we have any suitable laboratory material for the study of these urgent social problems. Most so-called primitive societies live relatively simple and uncomplicated lives; and by confining ourselves to a small and self-contained community it is still possible to watch the behaviour of the individual in the group, and, conversely, to see what reaction the group has on him.

578 It would not be difficult to make out a case proving that 152 jealousy is inherent in any capitalist society. It is true that the Lepchas are a good example of primitive socialism, but we are here not concerned with that side of the question. The point is that these people have realised that in the conditions in which they live sexual jealousy would make life

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578 ●
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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835 but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

578 152a I hope that I have now made it clear that among the Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and 439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the 411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy, ●578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and 595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.

411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by 291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

586 property, animals and children. If there is only one daughter the parents will divide her marriage price; she can live with either. If there is only one son the spouse keeping him must pay to the other Rs. 40, a cow and a pig and if the father keeps him a length of cloth to the wife, if the wife keeps him a copper vessel[9] to the husband. The last formal divorce in Lingthem was that of the first Dorjé Lapoon from his third and fourth wives (see Chapter Sixteen); a distant 'aunt' of the Mandal's was also divorced in this way in Sakhyong but there were no children.

If a woman runs away the husband's relatives will come for her and ask for her back or else claim the marriage price; but if the wife is unsatisfactory the husband will merely claim and get compensation in the form of the head and two legs of an ox and a scarf and rupee. Should such a girl re-marry a representative of the husband goes to the marriage; if the representative is the maternal uncle he is given Rs. 3 and half a leg of an ox; if the paternal uncle, Rs. 5 and the rump. By a recent decision of the twelve Mandals of Zongu in council it has been decided that these small recompenses shall be generally accepted for a runaway wife, instead of the large sums demanded earlier.

In the event of a woman showing a marked and continued preference for some man not her husband, the husband will almost always let her go to the lover. If the man cannot be classified as a 'younger brother' he must pay to the injured husband all the marriage expenses which he himself had paid earlier; or alternatively the girl's family will provide another girl as a substitute without further payment, but in that case the payments which the husband would have recovered from the lover will go to the girl's parents. If the lover is classifiable as a 'younger brother' the wife will probably be given to him for a small symbolical payment without any formalities; but it is understood that the younger brother will give special help if the elder brother remarries. Adultery, without really marked preference, is not a reason for divorce; and no anxiety is felt or expressed about the paternity of a man's children.

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581 In Lepcha theory marriage is not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups; and they have

[436] [9] A copper pot is the most conspicuous Lepcha valuable: it is used in a great number of sociological transactions.

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a set of rules by which the union can be continued despite the death of one of the partners. These rules are not uncommon in non-European societies and have been given the technical terms of levirate, by which a man marries his deceased elder brother's wife, and sororate, by which a woman marries her deceased elder sister's husband. The Lepchas employ both of these devices, but their application is very different, and the levirate claims are much more strongly pressed.

In Lepcha theory the husband's group purchases the wife, as is explicitly recognised in the term 'price of the bride', *nyom-sa afaar*, which is used for the *aséк* presents; therefore if the husband dies the wife is still the property of his group, and can be married to another member of the same group without further reference to her parents, though on such occasions the wife's parents are actually given small courtesy presents. In theory too the wife has no right to refuse the man offered in the place of her dead husband, or, if she feels an unconquerable repulsion, her group should supply a second woman to replace her. Similarly if the husband wishes to refuse the wife he has inherited he should supply another man in place of himself. In practice these regulations are not always carried out, and relatively seldom if the woman is childless; if the heritable spouse really dislikes her inheritor no compulsion is used to force her to marry him, nor are there any sanctions for this; three women formerly married to inhabitants of Lingthem have in recent years returned to their own homes on the death of their husbands because they did not like their inheritors, or because their inheritors did not like them. In such cases, if the women remarry, the marriage payments are made, not to their family group, but to the family groups of their dead husbands.

The sororate claims are enforced rather differently. On the forty-ninth day after the death of his wife the widower must visit his parents-in-law, taking with him as presents a load of *chi* and a pig; on the receipt of which the parents-in-law consult with all their male relatives and offer him as wife another girl, preferably a real or classificatory younger sister of the first wife. If the man does not wish to accept the offered girl (and if there is nobody else suitable sometimes babies are offered) on the following day he must present his wife's parents with an ox, or, failing that, a pig, a load of *chi*, a big basket of rice and Rs. 5, and ask their permission to refuse the girl and to marry, if he feels so inclined,

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proved to be jealous and possessive, and refused to allow her husband to sleep with Tafoor-mu. 595

Dunbi was the 'younger brother' (actually the son of a younger paternal uncle) of the Muktair; at the period when the second wife was brought home he was completely alone, for his parents, wife, and children had all died in a dysentery epidemic. The Muktair took him into his house, and there he so well consoled Tafoor-mu that she became pregnant. The Muktair thereupon offered her to Dunbi; he *asék*'d her with the symbolical gift of one pig, and the families separated. One year later the second wife died.

The position of Tafoor-mu is one of the saddest in Lingthem; formerly the wife of the most prosperous man in the neighbourhood, and with two prosperous sons, she is now married to the poorest and most feckless man in the village. She has borne him three daughters; the eldest is married away, the second lives with her half-brother, Tafoor—she is unbetrothed Prumtu, the girl with the squint—and the youngest is a child of six. Although Tafoor and Chudo give her occasional presents she lives and dresses poorly, and has to work hard to compensate for her husband's sloth. As far as I could observe, Tafoor and Chudo feel little love or respect for their unfortunate mother.

We in Europe make passionate and personal love one of the chief pivots round which our society moves; the Lepchas of Zongu have completely excluded it, and it is liable to be extremely disruptive when it does flare up. The normal emotional situation is one of reasonable affection founded on mutual rights and benefits; people love one another for statable and stated reasons. No love is considered automatic; it is not considered inevitable that parents should love their children nor brothers their brothers and sisters; it is merely considered probable, because their situations entail the mutual obligations on which love is supposed to rest. Unless people are strongly deviant Lepchas are chary of pronouncing judgement on their neighbours' characters; most people, they say, are much of a muchness. Consequently it is to be expected that arranged marriages will turn out well, unless one of the partners has a really bad character; since love is founded on mutual obligations and benefits, these mutual obligations can be set up between any two people. It is worth noting that all three men whose love stories are recounted above fall well outside the Lepcha norm. The Muktair was, it would appear, an exceptionally strong-willed and ambitious man, and his love affair started when he was living 152 586

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152 in foreign surroundings; also his second wife came from a mixed
581 community. Katel and Aga on the other hand are both subnormal; they are foolish, suspicious and disliked.

152 For the Lepchas of Zongu sexual activity is practically divorced
83 from emotion; it is a pleasant and amusing experience, and as much a necessity as food and drink; and like food and drink it does not matter from whom you receive it, as long as you get it; though you are naturally grateful to the people who provide you with either regularly. One of the most difficult of all concepts for the European to take into consideration is the non-European attitude to sexual activity; with us, explicitly on the part of men, sexual desirability is most intimately bound up with aesthetic considerations. Although there may be individual disagreement as to who are included in the terms, potential sexual partners are divided into the categories of 'attractive' and 'unattractive'; and we believe that only perverts or prostitutes will have anything to do with the second category. Primitive people, I believe, do not make this distinction; there is social kudos to be acquired from being the known possessor of a beautiful wife or mistress; but for temporary sexual gratification any willing partner is equally acceptable. I found it extremely difficult to accept the notion that most of the men with young and pretty wives at one time or another slept with the two sixty-year-old haridans who were the promiscuous women of Lingthem; but as far as I can make out their invitations were never refused.[13] Fourteen-year-old Chimpet gave a good illus-

[13] Professor Malinowski records a similar situation in the Trobriands in *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge: London, 1929) page 247–8: 'The (medical officer) was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with a very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhea, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman, so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. . . .' 'I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic but regular intercourse.' Professor Malinowski finds this notion so repulsive that he accounts for it 'by their manner of carrying out this physiological activity', which in the Trobriands may entail very slight physical contact. This explanation does not however hold good for the Lepchas; see Chapter Twelve, p. 330. I think primitives dissociate, in a way we cannot, the public attitudes of parading a desirable partner, and the private ones of physiological gratification. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in the Somerset village where I live potentially jealous situations arise in the case of people whom I personally would consider, either through age or ugliness, to be almost sexless.

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married, and as a consequence all their children were devils and snakes and lizards. As soon as they were born their mother cast them aside without giving them milk. Finally she produced a normal child called Rilbu Shingbu whom she nursed; but when the devils saw this child getting the milk that had been denied them they were jealous and they took counsel and killed the child. Their incest was betrayed by the dog who guarded the door. When the parents were shamed and the child killed they buried the child in the black rock on the right of the Talung valley, which can be seen to this day, and thereafter in disgust they divided their property and separated. Komsi*thing* went to Tibet and he took with him all the riches and jewels and animals which the Tibetans have till this day. Narzong-*nyou* turned towards our country but she was careless and that is why our country is so poor.

'After that Komsi*thing* summoned all the devils to him and all came except Doam *moong* who is the devil of leprosy, and he counselled the devils and said to them "You are devils and you must act according to your nature; but you must take an oath that when men are born you will accept them if they give you pigs and oxen and rice and other things to eat; if you are looked after you must go away, you must obey the Mun and Padem and the sacrificer". They all took this oath except Doam *moong* who was not present and that is the reason why you can never drive him away and leprosy cannot be cured.

'But still there was no Mun; Itpomu had placed all the devils in the big plain Azum Patham; but there they had nothing to eat. So then Itpomu created the Mun spirit and sent her to feed them. When the Mun arrived at Azum Patham she said to the devils "You are older than I am and I am helpless; I will return to Itpomu". But the devils begged her to stay, saying that if she went away they would always be hungry; if she stayed they would promise to obey her. They swore this by three great oaths; first they cut their finger nails and swore on them: then they spat on the Kashou tree and the tree withered, finally they spat in the sea and the sea dried up. Since that time the Mun must find out what sacrifices are needed and give them to the devils and the devils will always obey them.'

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The other important story for which *loong* has to be obtained before it can be publicly repeated is the story of the *Origin of Marriage*. With its internal repetitions and lists of names it takes between two and three hours to repeat; it is always repeated

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773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer
539 on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat
581 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for
[881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities
776 Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

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APPENDIX IV

THE SACRED STORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

(This is one of the two Lepcha stories which can only be recited by those people who have obtained the ceremonial qualification or *loong*. The other story is the long Mun genesis (see Chapter Eight, p. 223) of which the greater part consists of a long catalogue of names.

The sacred story of the origin of marriage has to be repeated in its entirety by the officiant at each marriage. It takes between two and three hours to rehearse, owing to the innumerable internal repetitions and culminations which I have indicated in brackets. Nearly every paragraph is repeated twice, and some many times more.)

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When Itpomu had completed creation there were no husbands and wives. The last person she bore was a son called Tarbong-bo whom she nursed. When the child grew big enough to work he told his mother that he would like to travel and see the world. His mother said " No, you are too young " but he insisted, and so she cooked some rice for him and put it into his knapsack. So the next morning he travelled by the road called Parhi Pageun and came to the top of Paki Chu ; from there he went down to Palyang Chu, which is a mountain above Sakhyong and can be seen on a clear day. From there he saw the *palit samper koong* tree covered with fruits, and *pedong*, *taryong athyak kanyoong* and many other birds eating the fruit. When he saw that he sat down and ate his rice ; then he returned home in the evening and climbed on to his mother's lap and sucked her milk. His mother then asked " What did you see ? " He told her what he had seen (*verbal repetition*). Then his mother said " If you are my son you must go and get *yongming yongsong* (which is a kind of bamboo) and the thread *komok ki* (to make traps)." That night he slept at home and the next day he went and got what his mother had said, cutting down the bamboos and returned home. The day after that he went back to Palyang Chu and made snares with the threads and set them on the trees and returned and climbed on his mother's lap and told her what he had done. His mother told him that he must go back early in the morning. He did so and found all the different sorts of birds caught in the snares, so many that they made a full load. When he had collected the birds he reset the snares and then went home and said to his mother " Mother, if these birds are good to eat, eat them and take them as my repayment for your milk : if they are no good, throw them away." Itpomu replied " They are good to eat : and I accept them as a recompense for my milk."

The next morning Tarbong returned to the tree, but instead of birds in the traps he found in every trap a penis, exactly like real life, made out of wood.

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539 Tarbong was angry at this, threw the penises away, and reset the traps. Then he went home and climbed on to his mother's lap and said " Mother, today
581 I have nothing to bring you ; there were no birds in the traps, just penises of wood." At this his mother said " If you are my son, you will go and hide yourself so carefully that even the birds cannot see you, and then in your hiding place you can stay and see who does this thing." The next morning he returned and found the snares again full of penises ; he threw them away, and reset the snares and then hid himself so well that even the birds could not see him. After a time a beautiful girl dressed in *kaji lasong* (nettle cloth) arrived and started to make wooden penises. She was very beautiful ; her name was Na Rip Nom, and her mother was Ta Im Ta Mit. Tarbong was angry when he saw her doing this and he climbed up the tree to try to stop her, and they struggled and rolled hither and thither ; and then he got excited and tried to rape her, but he could not do so and so they separated and he went home and climbed on his mother's lap and said to her " Mother, I have come home without any birds." " What did you see, my son ? " " I found Naripnom making penises of wood, and I tried to copulate with her, but I could not. So I return empty-handed. She is very beautiful." Then Itpomu said " If you want to possess that girl you had better go to your elder brother Komsi*thing* who lives at Rungzing Patham."

So Tarbong went to Komsi*thing*, and when he saw his younger brother he asked him why he had come. So Tarbong told him (*recapitulation*) : " This girl was putting penises in my traps, and I wanted to possess her but could not, and my mother advised me to come to you." Then Komsi-*thing* said " How can you expect to possess the girl unless you give the marriage price *nyomsa afaar* and make a sacrifice with *chi* and butter *sakyou tsok rum-faat ?* Do you love this girl ? " " Very much." " Then I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Nepal and get from him the pig of the plains Malu Mayeng and buy a copper vessel." So Tarbong went to Nepal and brought back a pig and a copper vessel. When he returned Komsi*thing* said " I advise you to go to your *ingzong* in Bhutan to get the cloth *kamo*." So he went to Bhutan and returned with the cloth, and then he had the pig and the copper pot and the cloth. (*The story cumulates—The House that Jack Built.*) From his Tibetan *ingzong* he got a rug Numbo. From Mayel near Konchen he got millet. From Kanyong (Sikkim) he got an ox.

Now at this time there was no fire in the world ; it was only in the land between earth and heaven called Mashyok Matel where the demons dwelt, in the houses of the Deut *moong* who were smiths and were called Tangshyo Tangong Karvo. Now when Komsi*thing* told Tarbong to go there to fetch fire to cook the millet he was frightened and said he would not go among the devils for then they would eat him. So Komsi*thing* called on all human beings and animals and birds and insects to volunteer to go and fetch the fire, promising rewards of gold and jewels and rich cloths. When this offer was made the bird Kahryok Fo smiled and said " I will go for a reward." And the bird flew there and found the smith's house empty as all the people were out working elsewhere, so it took a brand in its beak from the fireplace and flew back. On its way back it came to the Kashou tree (chestnut) ; there it felt hungry, and laid the brand on a branch while it looked for fruit. But the wind blew and the flames sprang up and a great fire raged over the world, and the bird was caught

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in it; that is the reason why till this day it has short feathers and a black face. It was ashamed and did not return to Komsi*thing*. 539

Komsi*thing* waited for the bird but it did not come and he saw the fire, so he asked for another volunteer; and this time an insect (? *wasp or firefly—like a grasshopper, but flies*) *taknyom nomyor nyom* volunteered to go for a reward. When it got to the smith's house all the Deut *moong* were away, so it lay on its back by the fireplace and looked at the house upside down; and the whole house turned upside down. When the Deut *moong* returned from the west it found its house upside down and searched and found the insect who had done it lying on its back; he tried to catch it, but it wriggled and flew away. The Deut *moong* said "Why have you upset my house in this way? I shall kill you for it." The insect said "If you do kill me, your house will never get straight again." "Please don't do that. What have you come for?" "Komsi*thing* has sent me to fetch fire." "I will give you some, if you promise to straighten my house; but you cannot carry fire in your mouth." "Yes, I can." They argued, and finally the insect took a brand in its mouth, and the Deut *moong* put a flint and tinder up its backside. On his return the insect rested by the Mong Ing Pong tree, and put down the brand at the foot of the tree; but the wind came and blew it to a blaze and the insect got therefrom a black face. But it flew back to Komsi*thing* and gave him the flint and tinder from his backside, since he had lost the brand; and he told him all that the Deut *moong* had told him, and showed him how to make a fire with dry grass. So they made a fire and cooked the millet in the copper vessel, but, when the millet was cooked they found they had no yeast. 581 773

The only person who possessed yeast was an old woman who lived in the plains called Numli-*nyou*; so Komsi*thing* asked who would volunteer to go and fetch it, promising great rewards. The insect *takder thing* said it would go and it went to live with the old woman for some days and helped her. One day she started to prepare *chi*, and cooked the millet; but when it came to the moment of putting in the yeast she covered *takder* with a close woven basket *tangar*. But when *takder* was inside he cried "Grandmother, in this basket I can see everything which is going on in the world; if you want to hide something from me you should cover me with a *tangjang* (this is a loose woven basket)." The old woman believed what he said and covered him with a *tangjang* and so he could see all that she was doing, though he pretended he could not. He saw her take a pot from the back of her neck, and pour something from it into her hands. Then she rubbed her hands together and scattered the dust over the cooked millet; she replaced the pot; and put the millet in the basket. Then *takder* cried "Grandmother, please take me out of this basket; I am suffocating." So Numli-*nyou* removed the basket.

After two days the lovely smell of ferment rose from the millet, and then the old woman put it in an earthen pot and covered the pot well up, and stood it over the fire. *Takder* tried to get the pot with yeast in it, but he could not; at last he hit on a plan. He told Numli-*nyou* he could see a louse in her hair and asked her to let him remove it: she agreed so he jumped on her shoulders and started delousing her. While this operation was going on Numli-*nyou* became sleepy; and then *takder* removed the pot very very slowly and very very quietly and ran away. When he was half-way away she woke up and missed *takder*. Then she discovered the theft and saw him running away and shouted after him

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"I thought you were my grandson, but I see you are nothing but a thief; you have stolen my yeast and will give it to everybody all over the world. So I set my curse on it; may it make everybody who drinks it drunk and quarrelsome." And so it has been; when people get drunk they quarrel.

When *takder* returned to Komsi*thing* with the yeast, Komsi*thing* asked him if he knew how to make *chi*: *takder* said he did (*complete recapitulation*) and they followed his instructions; but since they had no earthenware pots to put the fermented *chi* in they put it in baskets, well covered with leaves. Then Komsi*thing* asked *Taknyom* what reward he desired for bringing the fire: *Taknyom* replied "Gold and jewels and clothes are no use to an animal; what I want is to be given the plants *mangder* and *sanghlo* which grow in the valley." (*He was given these.*) Similarly *Takder* (*complete recapitulation*) was granted the leavings at the bottom of the spoons and plates and patyoot.

When the *chi* was ready all were afraid to be the first to drink. Eventually the snake Putsong *beu* was summoned and drank it; when it had drunk it dashed away like lightning. Seeing this all the gods and men were frightened to drink. After that the snake Pamol *beu* was summoned; but when it had drunk it ran about biting people and animals so that they all died. (When Sangé *rum* saw that the snake would kill everybody if it was allowed to behave so he set a lock on its mouth; and nowadays it bites very few people.) Next the snake Poblyok *beu* was summoned: when it had drunk it fell senseless. Komsi*thing* gave that snake the ferns to live in; it is harmless. After this they thought that the *chi* was harmless; but then they found they had no butter for *Sakyou faat*. So Komsi*thing* went to Itpomu and asked for butter so that they could *Sakyou faat* for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripmu. He said to his mother "We have the *chi*, but no butter." Itpomu said "Get a bamboo *yongtong*," and when he had got it she filled it with the butter which she had from her cows. Then on her instructions nine containers (*takner*) of *chi* were prepared, and their edges were smeared with butter.

Now all the gods and men gathered for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripnom. Everything was prepared in due order; all the gifts were placed on one side, and then Komsi*thing rum faat* with *chi* and *sakyou*. This is the reason why today when a marriage is celebrated all the gods are worshipped, and these gifts are given. Only when Tarbong and Naripmu were husband and wife was he able to possess her. This is the reason why to-day Lepchas still give the same gifts; this is BRI-IT, the origin of marriage.

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159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so. In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living. She has better jewellery than any other women in the village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581 ●
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."
773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

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581 539 773 then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyom-far*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

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581 539 773 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour something out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was, she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi;* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

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539 581 773 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

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it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539
mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581
you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773
like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285] such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285] special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

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cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to live on such things up to the present day. 581 539 773

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
●581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[584] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves
[567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
●581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[551] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all the tribal groups (*a-yit*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nan. tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-ran-mii*' and '*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*gö*', (gos) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

776 The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 83); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die. 685

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12] 627 [689]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:— [582]

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

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A child should know who are his *num-neu-ʒong*, that is those 835
people with whom all sexual contact is prohibited, by the time he is nine or ten. By the time he is twelve or thirteen a boy should also know those women whom he is permitted to sleep with—usually a very much smaller number than those who are forbidden. In the case of those relations of a generation above his own—that is to say, the wives of his father's 'elder brothers', he also has to know which of these women his father has slept with beforehand, for in that case the potential partner becomes permanently forbidden. Thus for example, Chimpet can never sleep with nor inherit his 'aunt' Mrs. Datoop (Tafoor calls Datoop 'elder brother' although they are actually three generations away from a common ancestor) because several years ago his father slept with her. Since sexual relationships outside the prohibited degrees are not considered embarrassing or important, no unpleasant or guilt-ridden situation arises through the father having to inform his son about his earlier sexual life. Such subjects are rather a matter for joking, but it would be a disaster if, through ignorance, the son cut short the family line.

iv.

Owing to the wide application of the incest ban it often happens 582
that a boy or girl has not a single potential spouse or unmarried love-partner in the same village; and consequently in the far greater number of cases a boy's wife has to be sought from a distant village, and a girl has to leave her home far behind when she goes to her husband. Of the sixty married women in Lingthem all but thirteen were from outside; and of these thirteen four had married newcomers to the village.[4] The remaining nine were either representatives of small *ptso*, or else their husbands were.

Lepchas make their first marriage extremely young. In Lingthem there was only one girl over fourteen unbetrothed, and that was Prumtu, who had a bad squint, was reputed to be lazy, and had a rough and unpleasing character. Eight boys over sixteen [732]
were unbetrothed; they were the two carpenters,[5] three mental defectives who will never be married, and three orphans. These orphans were Satéo, who was very badly lame and without property

[4] For a full list of married women and their place of origin see Appendix I, 2, Table II.

[5] See Chapter Four, p. 121.

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582 whom the Mandal was looking after, Takshyom, Kurma's nineteen-year-old nephew, and Kanchok, the seventeen-year-old adopted son of Chelim. Of these three it is possible that Satéo will never be married; if he were hale and able to do his work properly his poverty would not stand in his way; but nobody would want to give their daughter to a poor cripple. In Lingthem there is no suitable unrelated girl; if there were one the Mandal would probably arrange the match. The other two wards are expected to be betrothed shortly, as soon as a suitable partner with a fitting horoscope can be found. Mental defectives are never married, and people with incapacitating physical defects practically never.

583 There are two stages in Lepcha marriage: *asék*, or betrothal, and *bri* or bringing home the bride. *Asék* is actually the validating ceremony at which the formal gifts from the family of the groom to that of the bride are presented; these gifts are called 'the price of the bride' and once they are accepted the groom has full access to his bride and all children born after *asék* are considered as legitimate. But until the large and expensive marriage feast or *bri* has been performed, the wife and, possibly, her children, stay at her father's house save possibly for short visits; and during this period the son-in-law is, as it were, his father-in-law's servant, and has to go and work for him whenever he is summoned and cannot leave without obtaining his permission; he is in a subordinate position, and, though he may be taunted, must never answer back.

584 Marriages are always arranged through the offices of two *bek-bu*, or between-men, one representing each party. In theory any old and experienced man who knows how to make the formal and flowery speeches in *tang-bor* or allusive periphrases[6] can fill this rôle and in other villages there are a number of *bek-bu*; but in Lingthem in the last twenty years in all but two of the sixty marriages which have taken place the Mandal has filled this rôle. In theory the biological parents should have nothing at all to do with their children's marriages; were they to do so either the children would die young or the marriage would break up. All the negotiations concerning a marriage are carried on by the paternal or maternal uncles of the children, preferably a paternal-uncle-older-than-father, or people standing in this relation; but in point of fact the parents are always surreptitiously, and sometimes fairly openly consulted. The demand for marriage is always made in

[6] For further explanations of *tang-bor* and examples see Chapter Ten, p. 265.

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the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'. 584

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7] 582 584

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made. 584 [587]

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in 582 582 431

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

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582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

583 There is one other potential arrangement by which men without
597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapōn*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *aséḱ*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *aséḱ* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *aséḱ*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *aséḱ*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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582 will also be his wife's elder sister and equated with his mother-in-
835 law; similarly the elder brother will not have access to or be able to marry his wife's younger sister, because she is equated with his daughter-in-law. If there was an interval between the first and second marriages both parties would have the right of access until the second *asék*; to avoid such complication it is desirable that the marriages of pairs of brothers and sisters take place as nearly simultaneously as is possible.

The semi-diagrammatic complementary relations which are set up when two brothers marry and have sons are worth tabulating. The elder brother has to respect his younger brother's wife as his 'daughter-in-law', but his son need not as he can sleep with and inherit her; the younger brother need not respect his elder brother's wife as he can sleep with and inherit her, but his son must respect her as his 'big mother'.

587 In the event of a widow being left with young children it is essential that a husband be supplied from her husband's group, and this is usually done without any sort of friction. Thus Chano, himself a childless widower, recently inherited the wife and three young children of his dead elder brother. This is the one situation in which the provision of a levirate spouse is imperative; if the widow is sterile or the children all grown up and married there is no compulsion and such women often return to their own home. Not always however; at the age of 68 the second Dorjé Lapoon married *en secondes noces* his widowed 'aunt' (actually the wife of his grandmother's brother's son) Pumri, who was then aged 73. The two had however carried on a fairly constant concubinage in the last forty years of Pumri's husband's lifetime.

The chief disadvantage of the sororate and levirate claims is that it quite occasionally happens that there is considerable disparity between the ages of the spouses, and in particular that the woman will be considerably older than the man. A relatively poor family is liable to hand on a satisfactory woman even to a boy of nine or ten; the converse seldom occurs as a man will not accept a very young girl as a second wife. During my stay in Lingthem such a case was causing considerable dispute. Kahlyeu's grandson, Chélé, at the age of ten had inherited the wife of a dead younger uncle. This girl had only been married a year before the death of her husband, and was at the time only fifteen, but the psychological difference in their ages was far greater than the real difference. Chélé was a very bright and intelligent little boy, but

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858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normal human span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones 775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is 751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an [582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

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881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

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betrothed, but of these three were mental defectives, one was a cripple, and two were carpenters just returned from the state school at Gangtok;[1] the remaining two were adopted children, and in both cases the adopting fathers said they were searching for suitable spouses. 582 584

Some of the boys and girls may have had a little sporadic sexual experience before betrothal, especially if their elder siblings of the same sex are married; but it is by no means unusual for both parties to be complete virgins at the time of betrothal. The period between betrothal and marriage is usually the time of greatest sexual adventure and promiscuity; but this naturally depends on the affection the two betrothed feel for one another and, to a lesser extent, on the distance between their two villages; a betrothed pair who are fond of one another may quite probably be sexually exclusive; where they do not get on, and particularly if there is overt hostility, they are likely to look elsewhere. 584 836

A marriage is never arranged by the parents of the child concerned; were the parents to do so either the parties would die young or the marriage would break up. In Lingthem the marriages are usually proposed by the Mandal and negotiated through the intermediary of the child's uncles and grandparents on both sides, and especially the father's elder brother, or if such a man does not exist, anyone who stands in a similar relationship. Thus, in the marriage of Datoop's children, Tafoor acted as the 'father's elder brother'; actually Tafoor is nineteen years younger than Datoop and they are four generations removed from a common ancestor (their respective paternal grandmothers were biological sisters); Datoop was an only child and Tafoor the most responsible related man of the same generation; since they are connected by females they are obviously of different *ptso*. 584

All the real marriage negotiations are carried on between two *bek-bu* (between-men) representing each side. Any experienced and tactful man with the exception of the spouse's father, who knows the correct things to say and the correct way to say them and has a sufficient vocabulary of *tang-bor* may take this rôle; in Lingthem the Mandal has performed this office for nearly every couple in the last twenty years, but in other villages a variety of people perform this rôle and the choice of *bek-bu* is a personal one dictated by the friendliness of the betrothed person and his family. In by far the greater number of cases the two children to be betrothed do not

[1] See Chapter Four, p. 121, and Chapter Six, p. 153.

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TABLE III

FECUNDITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

842 [582]

The Lepchas are mainly exogamous: that is to say by far the greater number of women in the community have come in from outside, and by far the greater number of girls will marry into other villages. In the second column the following signs are used:

L—from Lingthem or the other smaller villages under Chala Mandal.

Z—from Zongu, the Lepcha reserve in which Lingthem is situated. Taking the average number of inhabitants per household in Lingthem —5.3—as valid for the whole area, the total population of Zongu is about 2000.

X—Lepcha from outside Zongu.

XX—Partly Sikkimese.

The question marks in this column indicate that I could not discover if the women were born inside or outside Zongu. None of the women so marked are from Lingthem, nor have any admixture of foreign blood.

It is probable that the number of children who have died in infancy is an understatement, as the Lepchas attach little emotional importance to children dying very young and may forget about them. Of the sterile women under sixty, I am certain, however, that they have never borne a child alive or dead.

sb. in columns 5 and 6 stands for a still-born child.

P. in column 7 means that the woman was pregnant in April 1937.

Date of birth	*Place of origin*	*Live children* M	*Live children* F	*Dead children* M	*Dead children* F	*Age at birth of first child*
1852	?	1	1	1	?	?
1858	L	1	?	?	?	?
1863	?	2	4	1	1	?
1864	?	?	?	?	?	?
1866	?	1	?	?	?	?
1870	Z	1	–	1	–	?30
1871	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1871	L	–	–	–	–	–
1873	L	–	1	2	–	?
1875	Z	2	1	1	–	?
1875	?	–	–	–	–	–
1877	X	–	–	1	1	?
1877	X	–	–	–	–	–
1881	Z	–	3	1	–	?
1883	Z	2	3	1	–	19
1884	X	–	–	2	–	?
1885	Z	2	3	–	–	?
1887	Z	3	1	–	–	24

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head. [582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction. [593] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in [587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill. [861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopōn, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [364]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with
whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook,
and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the
house. No arrangements have so far been made for her
marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner
during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age.
He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him
do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons
would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of
devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and
even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after
dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the
time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru
Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and
would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his
wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the
least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom
he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was
sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books.
After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Umzet. – Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [297]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [532]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412]
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582] living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to cooperate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 in whose neighbourhood they had settled, two or three clans often worshipping the same mountain. It became customary, that each clan had to perform an annual sacrifice to the spirit of its particular mountain. In regard to marriage, there is no obstacle—unless
582 a blood relationship exists or that people belong actually to the same clan—that members of two clans, which venerate the same peak, should not intermarry. In case that bride and bridegroom belong to clans, which worship two different mountains, the wife will have to sacrifice after the marriage to the sacred peak of her husbands clan.

18. They are made from a certain kind of reed; on the top of the stick cuts are made in
791 such a way, that these parts open in the form of a flower. These sticks are regarded as the symbol of the magical power, over which the sorcerer commands.

[see cat. 116, p. 36. - Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks, maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone, or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman; there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden caps.- Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] 583 future father-in-law, the parties being often united before the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the 585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste, 581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being [684] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field, 462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves [567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been [751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

23: Benedict ●
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

422 The children look after and feed these animals a little, and will cry if they are sold. The parents however are at perfect liberty to sell them, if they wish to, without consulting the owner; the money is said to be set against the expenses incurred for the child's clothes. If on the other hand the parents kill the animals for sacrifice or food, they have to replace them, and any young the animals bear belong to the owner. Also when they are still very young children are given a tiny piece of land as their own field; at first the parents help them with their work, but by about the age of twelve the children are expected to be able to look after them by themselves. As the children grow older the size of their field is increased. The grain from the children's fields is harvested separately and kept in a special container, but the house-mother can use it for household purposes without consulting the child. The produce is stated to be set against the children's clothes and knife, and, in the case of young girls, jewels. In general the privately-
422 owned animals and grain are not set apart from the others in any
583 way; only when girls go to their husband's village they take with them their private animals and the last year's harvested grain as a sort of dowry. When a wife settles into her husband's home she is generally given small portions of rice terrace and cardamum field, from the proceeds of which she can buy jewels. In this manner everybody, even the youngest children, is given the appearance of being self-supporting, of feeding and clothing themselves by their own work.

422 It seems as though nearly everybody except the very poorest have a few private animals. Mrs. Datoop, one of the richer women in Lingthem, says that at her marriage she brought with her six or seven cattle and other animals. She now owns ten head of cattle, three rice terraces, and two cardamum fields which yield about sixteen maunds; she bought her very fine jewels with the proceeds. When her two daughters were married each took with her a pair of each sort of animal, a big copper pot, and jewels which had been bought from the proceeds of their grain and animals. Her daughter-in-law Mrs. Pembu, brought with her when she was married oxen, goats, chickens and crops; but most of these have been used for the household, and now she only claims as her own two pigs and three chickens. Her jewels are all presents from relatives. Since she and her husband are the sole owners of their property she has no private land.

Chimpet, Tafoor's oldest son, aged fourteen, owns a pig given

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

582 whom the Mandal was looking after, Takshyom, Kurma's nineteen-year-old nephew, and Kanchok, the seventeen-year-old adopted son of Chelim. Of these three it is possible that Satéo will never be married; if he were hale and able to do his work properly his poverty would not stand in his way; but nobody would want to give their daughter to a poor cripple. In Lingthem there is no suitable unrelated girl; if there were one the Mandal would probably arrange the match. The other two wards are expected to be betrothed shortly, as soon as a suitable partner with a fitting horoscope can be found. Mental defectives are never married, and people with incapacitating physical defects practically never.

583 There are two stages in Lepcha marriage: *aséк*, or betrothal, and *bri* or bringing home the bride. *Aséк* is actually the validating ceremony at which the formal gifts from the family of the groom to that of the bride are presented; these gifts are called 'the price of the bride' and once they are accepted the groom has full access to his bride and all children born after *aséк* are considered as legitimate. But until the large and expensive marriage feast or *bri* has been performed, the wife and, possibly, her children, stay at her father's house save possibly for short visits; and during this period the son-in-law is, as it were, his father-in-law's servant, and has to go and work for him whenever he is summoned and cannot leave without obtaining his permission; he is in a subordinate position, and, though he may be taunted, must never answer back.

584 Marriages are always arranged through the offices of two *bek-bu*, or between-men, one representing each party. In theory any old and experienced man who knows how to make the formal and flowery speeches in *tang-bor* or allusive periphrases[6] can fill this rôle and in other villages there are a number of *bek-bu*; but in Lingthem in the last twenty years in all but two of the sixty marriages which have taken place the Mandal has filled this rôle. In theory the biological parents should have nothing at all to do with their children's marriages; were they to do so either the children would die young or the marriage would break up. All the negotiations concerning a marriage are carried on by the paternal or maternal uncles of the children, preferably a paternal-uncle-older-than-father, or people standing in this relation; but in point of fact the parents are always surreptitiously, and sometimes fairly openly consulted. The demand for marriage is always made in

[6] For further explanations of *tang-bor* and examples see Chapter Ten, p. 265.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *aśék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *aśék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *aśék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

583 There is one other potential arrangement by which men without
597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *aśék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

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584 know one another at all before betrothal. In a relatively few cases they are near neighbours, in which case the betrothal is more likely to have been arranged at the request of the boy, or the children may have met casually on visits. This is particularly liable to happen when a woman's daughters marry back into their mother's village. Before the actual betrothal visit is made an 'uncle' of the boy may take him on a visit to inspect his future spouse; the boy may be asked if he fancies the girl, but the question is really a formality, for if he says 'No' this reply is usually put down to shame, and the betrothal is proceeded with regularly.

The first preliminary to arranging a marriage is a visit of the *bek-bu* by himself to the girl's village; on this visit he will take with him a load of *chi*. He will go to some neighbouring house—never the house where the girl herself lives—and will discover what man of the village is acting as the girl's *bek-bu*; to this man he will give the load of *chi* and start negotiations for the marriage. The girl's *bek-bu* will discuss the proposition with the girl's family—particularly her uncles—but the father and mother are also unofficially consulted. As a matter of form the girl's family will belittle the match on the first conversation, saying that they do not wish yet to get rid of their daughter, that the proposed match is not good enough, and so on. If they do not know the boy proposed they will send to make enquiries about his character, as to whether he is a good and industrious worker, peaceable and generous. The girl's family will always refuse at the first discussion and usually at the second; if they have not agreed when the subject is broached for the third time the negotiations are called off. If they do agree the *bek-bu* will present them with a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and a date will be set for the formal *aséк*, dependent on the lama's horoscope not being completely unfavourable. This preliminary is called *kachyoong*.

583 For *aséк* considerable gifts are demanded, and these are called 'the price of the bride'. These gifts do not actually represent the chief expense of the marriage—that is involved in the marriage feast—but they are articles which are not consumed in common but which are given over to the family of the girl. After these gifts have been accepted the marriage is considered to be legitimatised, even though the groom has not brought his bride home; children born after *aséк* are fully legitimate, and if the betrothal is broken, either the gifts or their equivalent in money must be returned, or another girl provided as substitute. The *aséк* gifts consist of two

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pigs, a large copper pot, or in lieu of it Rs. 20 for the girl's father, a length of fine cloth, or in lieu Rs. 13 (formerly Rs. 20) for the mother, Rs. 3 for the bride, and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee for the girl's *bek-bu*. 583

When these gifts have been collected, they are consecrated by a special Mun ritual in the groom's house before being taken to the girl's family. If the house contains a lamaist altar this is decorated and *chimi* are lit, and the offerings placed before it, the disembowelled pigs in front, and behind the copper pot with the other gifts on top of it. An officiant is needed to consecrate the gifts; it is preferable that the 'sacrificer', the *rum-faat-bu*, should be a Mun, but it can also be performed by any old and experienced layman with the necessary qualification. Incense is burned, *chi* from a buttered cup and rice offered, and a long invocation is made to the gods to bless the marriage and make it fruitful; besides the personal and *ptso* supernaturals of the groom special emphasis is placed on the appeal to Komsi*thing* and Tarbong-bo, who are involved in the original institution of marriage.[2] After the consecration a ceremonial meal of rice and sausages made from the pig's intestines is eaten, and the groom then sets off with his *bek-bu* and three men to carry the presents. The carriers should be ideally a paternal uncle, a maternal uncle and an elder brother; failing them, people standing in a similar position are employed. 583 782

At this visit the groom and his party usually stop three or four days at the girl's house. The two betrothed are meant to keep together, sitting by one another and feeding one another, and to sleep side by side. At this initial meeting the attention of all the elders is concentrated on noticing the way the two young people behave towards one another; because of this attention, and on account of the general situation, the young couple are usually in an agony of self-conscious shame and can hardly bear to look at or speak to one another. 583 584

After this initial visit the *asék* party returns home, but a few days later the groom makes a second visit, taking with him a gift of meat and usually accompanied by an uncle. At this visit the young couple, if they are of a suitable age, are meant to copulate together, and their uncles are meant to supervise this operation to make sure it takes place; if they do not, the one who refuses to do so—and it is considered equally likely that the refuser will be the boy or the girl—will be severely admonished and may be thrashed by

[2] See Appendix IV. The Sacred Story of the Origin of Marriage.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

583 his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not
584 sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

584 This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asík*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was
593 celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the
585 marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

F 320

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

●583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some ¹/₂ are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [B7]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583 ●
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

¹/₂ [i.e., wooden caps.- Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

future father-in-law, the parties being often united before the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste, and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field, and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 538 With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[431] manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between the two parties.

177 This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

582 whom the Mandal was looking after, Takshyom, Kurma's nineteen-year-old nephew, and Kanchok, the seventeen-year-old adopted son of Chelim. Of these three it is possible that Satéo will never be married; if he were hale and able to do his work properly his poverty would not stand in his way; but nobody would want to give their daughter to a poor cripple. In Lingthem there is no suitable unrelated girl; if there were one the Mandal would probably arrange the match. The other two wards are expected to be betrothed shortly, as soon as a suitable partner with a fitting horoscope can be found. Mental defectives are never married, and people with incapacitating physical defects practically never.

583 There are two stages in Lepcha marriage: *asék*, or betrothal, and *bri* or bringing home the bride. *Asék* is actually the validating ceremony at which the formal gifts from the family of the groom to that of the bride are presented; these gifts are called 'the price of the bride' and once they are accepted the groom has full access to his bride and all children born after *asék* are considered as legitimate. But until the large and expensive marriage feast or *bri* has been performed, the wife and, possibly, her children, stay at her father's house save possibly for short visits; and during this period the son-in-law is, as it were, his father-in-law's servant, and has to go and work for him whenever he is summoned and cannot leave without obtaining his permission; he is in a subordinate position, and, though he may be taunted, must never answer back.

584 Marriages are always arranged through the offices of two *bek-bu*, or between-men, one representing each party. In theory any old and experienced man who knows how to make the formal and flowery speeches in *tang-bor* or allusive periphrases[6] can fill this rôle and in other villages there are a number of *bek-bu*; but in Lingthem in the last twenty years in all but two of the sixty marriages which have taken place the Mandal has filled this rôle. In theory the biological parents should have nothing at all to do with their children's marriages; were they to do so either the children would die young or the marriage would break up. All the negotiations concerning a marriage are carried on by the paternal or maternal uncles of the children, preferably a paternal-uncle-older-than-father, or people standing in this relation; but in point of fact the parents are always surreptitiously, and sometimes fairly openly consulted. The demand for marriage is always made in

[6] For further explanations of *tang-bor* and examples see Chapter Ten, p. 265.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'. 584

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7] 582 584

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made. 584 [587]

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in 582 582 431

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

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597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

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betrothed, but of these three were mental defectives, one was a cripple, and two were carpenters just returned from the state school at Gangtok;[1] the remaining two were adopted children, and in both cases the adopting fathers said they were searching for suitable spouses. 582 584

Some of the boys and girls may have had a little sporadic sexual experience before betrothal, especially if their elder siblings of the same sex are married; but it is by no means unusual for both parties to be complete virgins at the time of betrothal. The period between betrothal and marriage is usually the time of greatest sexual adventure and promiscuity; but this naturally depends on the affection the two betrothed feel for one another and, to a lesser extent, on the distance between their two villages; a betrothed pair who are fond of one another may quite probably be sexually exclusive; where they do not get on, and particularly if there is overt hostility, they are likely to look elsewhere. 581 836

A marriage is never arranged by the parents of the child concerned; were the parents to do so either the parties would die young or the marriage would break up. In Lingthem the marriages are usually proposed by the Mandal and negotiated through the intermediary of the child's uncles and grandparents on both sides, and especially the father's elder brother, or if such a man does not exist, anyone who stands in a similar relationship. Thus, in the marriage of Datoop's children, Tafoor acted as the 'father's elder brother'; actually Tafoor is nineteen years younger than Datoop and they are four generations removed from a common ancestor (their respective paternal grandmothers were biological sisters); Datoop was an only child and Tafoor the most responsible related man of the same generation; since they are connected by females they are obviously of different *ptso*. 584

All the real marriage negotiations are carried on between two *bek-bu* (between-men) representing each side. Any experienced and tactful man with the exception of the spouse's father, who knows the correct things to say and the correct way to say them and has a sufficient vocabulary of *tang-bor* may take this rôle; in Lingthem the Mandal has performed this office for nearly every couple in the last twenty years, but in other villages a variety of people perform this rôle and the choice of *bek-bu* is a personal one dictated by the friendliness of the betrothed person and his family. In by far the greater number of cases the two children to be betrothed do not

[1] See Chapter Four, p. 121, and Chapter Six, p. 153.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

584 know one another at all before betrothal. In a relatively few cases they are near neighbours, in which case the betrothal is more likely to have been arranged at the request of the boy, or the children may have met casually on visits. This is particularly liable to happen when a woman's daughters marry back into their mother's village. Before the actual betrothal visit is made an 'uncle' of the boy may take him on a visit to inspect his future spouse; the boy may be asked if he fancies the girl, but the question is really a formality, for if he says 'No' this reply is usually put down to shame, and the betrothal is proceeded with regularly.

The first preliminary to arranging a marriage is a visit of the *bek-bu* by himself to the girl's village; on this visit he will take with him a load of *chi*. He will go to some neighbouring house—never the house where the girl herself lives—and will discover what man of the village is acting as the girl's *bek-bu*; to this man he will give the load of *chi* and start negotiations for the marriage. The girl's *bek-bu* will discuss the proposition with the girl's family—particularly her uncles—but the father and mother are also unofficially consulted. As a matter of form the girl's family will belittle the match on the first conversation, saying that they do not wish yet to get rid of their daughter, that the proposed match is not good enough, and so on. If they do not know the boy proposed they will send to make enquiries about his character, as to whether he is a good and industrious worker, peaceable and generous. The girl's family will always refuse at the first discussion and usually at the second; if they have not agreed when the subject is broached for the third time the negotiations are called off. If they do agree the *bek-bu* will present them with a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and a date will be set for the formal *asék*, dependent on the lama's horoscope not being completely unfavourable. This preliminary is called *kachyoong*.

583 For *asék* considerable gifts are demanded, and these are called 'the price of the bride'. These gifts do not actually represent the chief expense of the marriage—that is involved in the marriage feast—but they are articles which are not consumed in common but which are given over to the family of the girl. After these gifts have been accepted the marriage is considered to be legitimatised, even though the groom has not brought his bride home; children born after *asék* are fully legitimate, and if the betrothal is broken, either the gifts or their equivalent in money must be returned, or another girl provided as substitute. The *asék* gifts consist of two

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pigs, a large copper pot, or in lieu of it Rs. 20 for the girl's father, a length of fine cloth, or in lieu Rs. 13 (formerly Rs. 20) for the mother, Rs. 3 for the bride, and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee for the girl's *bek-bu*. 583

When these gifts have been collected, they are consecrated by a special Mun ritual in the groom's house before being taken to the girl's family. If the house contains a lamaist altar this is decorated and *chimi* are lit, and the offerings placed before it, the disembowelled pigs in front, and behind the copper pot with the other gifts on top of it. An officiant is needed to consecrate the gifts; it is preferable that the 'sacrificer', the *rum-faat-bu*, should be a Mun, but it can also be performed by any old and experienced layman with the necessary qualification. Incense is burned, *chi* from a buttered cup and rice offered, and a long invocation is made to the gods to bless the marriage and make it fruitful; besides the personal and *ptso* supernaturals of the groom special emphasis is placed on the appeal to Komsi*thing* and Tarbong-bo, who are involved in the original institution of marriage.[2] After the consecration a ceremonial meal of rice and sausages made from the pig's intestines is eaten, and the groom then sets off with his *bek-bu* and three men to carry the presents. The carriers should be ideally a paternal uncle, a maternal uncle and an elder brother; failing them, people standing in a similar position are employed. 583 782

At this visit the groom and his party usually stop three or four days at the girl's house. The two betrothed are meant to keep together, sitting by one another and feeding one another, and to sleep side by side. At this initial meeting the attention of all the elders is concentrated on noticing the way the two young people behave towards one another; because of this attention, and on account of the general situation, the young couple are usually in an agony of self-conscious shame and can hardly bear to look at or speak to one another. 583 584

After this initial visit the *asék* party returns home, but a few days later the groom makes a second visit, taking with him a gift of meat and usually accompanied by an uncle. At this visit the young couple, if they are of a suitable age, are meant to copulate together, and their uncles are meant to supervise this operation to make sure it takes place; if they do not, the one who refuses to do so—and it is considered equally likely that the refuser will be the boy or the girl—will be severely admonished and may be thrashed by

[2] See Appendix IV. The Sacred Story of the Origin of Marriage.

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his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asík*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

F. 320

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

593 adopted brother, and Kutt'r were now getting on all right with their
586 wives after a preliminary period of conflict in each case lasting about four years. Kutt'r who was eighteen years old was married at the age of fourteen to a wife one month after *asék*, before which he had never met her. She had only come to live with him in the last few months. First of all they disliked one another thoroughly; then by the pressure of their families they were brought to sleep together but did not do anything. Only in the last two or three months have they copulated together; now they like one another.

585 Gongyop's son was born in 1919; he is a very girlish-looking and under-developed boy and preternaturally shy; it will be remembered that he was drinking his mother's milk up to the age of ten. Before *asék* he did not know his wife; *asék* took place about six months ago. The girl is older and bigger than he and at first he was frightened of her, though she spoke nicely to him. On May 19th he returned from his third visit to her at which they had slept together. He came home with a look on his face like a cat which had just been fed on cream and seemed rather proud of himself; he said that now he likes his wife. Datoop's younger son was *asék* by proxy for his elder brother Pichi; but Pichi at the beginning of May definitely refused the marriage and instead the youngest son was going to marry the girl. On May 9th he went off with his father to pay a visit to his bride. I asked the boy what present he was taking to his parents-in-law, at which his father replied 'His present is between his legs'. He was, however, also taking a leg of meat with him. Datoop hoped that, if the harvest was good, the girl would be brought home in the autumn.

On March 19th Mikmar, Chano's eldest son, aged thirteen, was *asék*'d to an unknown girl three or four years older than himself. By May 9th he had paid the girl three visits. They are patently unable to sleep together for Mikmar is still very childish, but they get on well enough together and give each other food.

584 In Lingthem there were only four unmarried girls over the age of twelve; of these Prumtu, the girl with the squint, is likely to wait some time before marrying and Tafoor's eldest daughter has only just passed twelve and has not yet been asked for. The other two girls are the two eldest daughters of Pargetu, aged sixteen and twelve respectively; they have been *asék*'d to two brothers. The
593 younger girl, Tangvoong, gets on well enough with her young husband, but the older one, Kondé, does not; the two both fight

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like cat and dog. This girl had a very unpleasant eruption of boils all over her face and I saw a great deal of her because she used to come up every third day to have her boils dressed; they were cured before I left. According to Tafoor, who is a very distant sort of uncle, the girl got her boils from a devil which was brought by her husband with the *asék* presents. She does not like her husband, and has so far refused to sleep with him (or, Tafoor thinks, anybody else). Tafoor considers that the fault really lies with the husband, who should have forced her to sleep with him when she came to his house; he did not, probably because he was ashamed. If she persists in not liking him she will be spoken to and given a beating to make her; it is simply naughtiness on her part.

During my stay in Lingthem Kondé was taken to visit her prospective husband once and the husband came also twice to her house to help her parents work. The situation did not develop in any way. Kondé had got into an attitude of rebellious mutism in which she refused to do anything or to speak to anybody unless it was absolutely necessary. The only person who seemed to have any influence with her was Mrs. Datoop, who was a distant 'aunt by marriage'. Her attitude was completely mulish; so to speak, she dug in her feet and put back her ears and refused to budge. She showed no preference for anybody other than her betrothed; her attitude was entirely negative, she did not want to marry and especially not to marry the man provided for her. When she addressed him she used to use the childish abusive phrases, which have normally been abandoned and forgotten by people of her age. Kondé was a good and industrious girl and a considerable help to her parents, but she did not and would not get married. It was, I think, much more the fear of separation from her parents and home, even though she would be accompanied by a younger sister, which motivated her refusal, rather than actual dislike of her husband, who chiefly personified exile.

These examples will show that in about half the cases of betrothal there is considerable hostility on the part of the girl. For the girl marriage means nearly always geographical separation from her family—almost a second weaning—and many of them do not face this prospect cheerfully. This psychological disturbance cannot by any means be equated with puberty for betrothal may take place at any age from eight upwards. It is an intellectual and not a physical disturbance. It seems to me very probable that it is the successful overcoming of this second weaning which gives to young

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584 women so much more self-assurance than young men of similar age possess.

Occasionally the hostility to the marriage comes from the young man, but except in the rare cases where a boy is betrothed to a woman—the Lepchas do not regard disparity of age and in several marriages the wife is four or five years older than her husband—opposition is personal and not emotional. It is that particular girl which the boy dislikes, very often because he has already choser. somebody else whom he prefers. Aplung refused his wife (who was subsequently married to Rigya) because he wanted to marry Tobgé's stepmother, a woman considerably older than himself. When young men do choose wives for themselves they seem almost always to chose mature women. In the case of young boys who are *asék* to older women or who inherit them as levirate spouses the hostility is to marriage and sex as such. They simply have no desire for marriage yet. Thus, Chélé refused, or tried to refuse, to have anything to do with the wife he inherited from an uncle, and Itup, Takneum's son, refused to have anything to do with the wife he inherited when he was ten.

Although all the boys that I talked to very much wanted to be grown up, they displayed an almost uniform lack of interest in marriage. The only boy who said that he wanted to get married was Ribu, aged twelve; and he said he wanted to get married so as to have somebody to help him in the fields. In his particular case extra help was welcome and necessary; the household consisted of two old widowed grandmothers, a widowed mother, and an elder brother Patek, aged seventeen, and his wife; the proportion of dependents to adult workers was particularly adverse. With the exception of Chélé all the boys over ten wanted very much to grow up, and especially to achieve complete sexual potency 'so as to be able to —— the girls properly', but marriage as such was considered as an inevitable but not particularly desirable condition of full adulthood. Chimpet based the adolescent attitude of marriage neatly in the antithesis that (*a*) marriage is a great waste of money and animals and (*b*) if you don't get married and sleep with other men's wives you will be fined.

For boys betrothal is a much more actively disagreeable time than for girls. Between *asék* and the marriage feast the groom is in a more openly dependent and humiliating position than at any other period of his life. His parents-in-law have powers of compulsion and shame over him which his own parents do not possess; he

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

has to visit his parents-in-law and help them with their work whenever he is summoned; incapacitating illness is the only acceptable excuse for refusing a father-in-law's order; neither personal nor family interests may stand in the way. When he is in his father-in-law's house the groom is under considerable restraint; he must be modest and circumspect in his language and behaviour and must be consistently respectful to his bride's parents and elder siblings. His wife's brothers have considerable licence to tease him and to use obscene language to him; he must on no account retort in kind; if he were to do so he would be shamed. Though his bedding is placed beside that of his bride he can only copulate with her in semi-secrecy; he has to wait until he is certain that everybody else is sound asleep, or otherwise he would be considered shameless. Even if he is on friendly terms with his bride his visits to her home are periods of constraint and humiliation; if, as so often happens, they disagree, these visits are likely to be the most positively unpleasant circumstances in his whole life. A groom can only leave his wife's family at the express permission of his father-in-law. 584

This period of semi-servitude is felt to be extremely disagreeable; but it is also considered inevitable, and no attempt is made to sidestep it. For the parents of the groom this service with the father-in-law is to a great extent considered as the continuance and finishing of the process of education which started when the child achieved physical independence. Their attitude could, I think, be paralleled with that of English middle-class parents who send their sons away to boarding school; they realise that the boys will be less happy than they would be at home but they consider it an inevitable stage in the attainment of full adulthood.

During the period of *asék* the groom spends about half his time with his parents-in-law. The length of each individual stay depends on the distance between the two villages; if the two houses are not more than a day's journey apart about a week will be spent alternatively in each; if they are farther away, about a month. The period of *asék* varies considerably, according to the wealth and inclination of the groom's parents; marriage may be performed one month after *asék* or there may be an interval of several years; the average period is about eighteen months. It is also necessary that the lamas find an auspicious day for the marriage from their horoscope books, but that does not usually entail a delay of more than a few weeks.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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584 Betrothal does not by any means necessarily imply sexual connection between the betrothed. It does, however, usually indicate the commencement of sexual activity for both parties, and almost always for the boys. The majority of Lepcha men receive their sexual initiation and education from a potential levirate spouse—the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle'—and very often at the woman's direct invitation. It is a Lepcha axiom that women never make the first advances and most people repeat this statement; but a number of men when recounting their own early sex experiences tell of direct invitation and solicitation from these potential spouses; timid Jiroong indeed was at the age of fifteen as nearly raped as it is possible for a man to be by his elder brother's wife. Fathers instruct their sons as to the women they have a right to sleep with, and the women whom, though potentially heritable, they must avoid because their fathers have already slept with them.[3] Elder brothers, too, on their marriage give their younger brothers formal permission to sleep with their wives. These legitimate copulations must be practised discreetly and nearly always take place during the temporary absence of the real spouse. It is considered desirable that a boy should first sleep with a woman older than himself so as to be taught how to do it properly. For the Lepchas there is nothing incongruous in a man sleeping with a woman twice his age, and it would seem indeed that young men find older women more attractive; in the few cases where a young man has been able to choose his own bride they have always chosen elder women. It has already been remarked that fully grown younger brothers transfer many of their attitudes towards their fathers to their elder brothers; I find it, however, impossible to gauge to what extent if any the elder brothers' wives are equated with the mothers.

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833 836 Although the great majority of men receive their sexual initiation from an elder sister-in-law, a few have their first experience with contemporaries. Thus Chimpet has twice slept with a girl of his own age at Parfok at her invitation; he enjoyed the experience and would like to repeat it, but does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. Similarly Rigya was seduced at the age of fifteen by a girl of the same age in a neighbouring village;

[3] See Chapter Six, p. 153.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

(b) Marriage Horoscopes

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Forecast of marriage of Tafoor. Tiger and Water year, and his wife, Horse and Fire year.

O X wife will die before husband
O O both will have good health
O
O O They will have many children
O X their property will be moderate only
X X they will have short lives
O X if his wife is ill he will be able to help her.

For another marriage, the man Dog year and Iron year, the woman Ox year and Water year.

O
O O both will live long
X
X O but their health will be indifferent
O O they will be very rich
O O exorcism will be successful for them
X but their children will die.

(c) Death Horoscope

787

(This is also an imaginary horoscope for a man aged seventy-three and therefore *kalok nam*—Rat year—dying on Sunday, 16th May.)

Sooksa dyeu adum nyetka mak—time of death. Died from being given *chip-tsok*—unclean food. His soul is being eaten by Tseng and Gebu supernaturals. Before his death there was an evil sign such as a python in the house or a cock crowing at night, or a big tree falling tip towards the house, or a fireplace falling through on to the earth.

Lyoo deu anok kat (' The lake of his soul was dry '). Much property was expended over his illness. His death was caused by his failing to give a feast. One sister was his enemy and made him either quarrel or go to war.

Ongtong lyoo adum nyet. At the end of his life there was a quarrel between Kado Palor *rum* and Deut *moong* for his soul, whether he should be allowed to live or die. Tamseu Pongseu *moong* took his soul away and gave it to Tongryoong *moong*, who is like a tiger, to eat. At the time of his death he was thinking about his youngest son.

Loongto dyeu adum nyet. Either he had been given a red cloth or a piece of meat, or he had been given a black hat by a Mun ku-man-bu (sorcerer); this made unhappy Palor *rum* and therefore the *moong* took his soul. He was preoccupied about his male relations on the father's side; therefore these people should perform for him the ceremony of Karbo Tookdeu Klon (a white *deu* on a *pong-ring*).

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584] ●
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, his wife being four years younger. He had already started his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years, when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told me they were very anxious while he was away from home and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him. Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was still away from home his parents decided that it was time for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi came home the following year he at once made it clear that he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is

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As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

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utstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
ld woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
irst encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his
romiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
hought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
loing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
oung people principally in terms of their suitability as
ossible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-
etween for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays
obody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this
luty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman,
ut merely as an experienced member of the community
whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take
im frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he
s on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a
osition to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course
ettled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in
ases such as these certain formal arrangements are later
hought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not kn
he correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for
his reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
nd although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ninistration which one would normally expect to find only
n a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being
lliterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
xtraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others
ecause he has to remember everything "in his heart and
elly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because
e was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great
eal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the
nonastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only
nes we had were of the camp variety; and having been with
ne all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of dis-
epair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

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I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem, so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting, however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalimpong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and becoming the usual thing among the younger generation: and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such "uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me, it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation, and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders, who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder* brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is not considered to be actually incestuous.

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 584
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

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584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chut*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with

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587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if
● 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the
585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

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 585

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away. On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relations, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

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583 his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not
584 sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

584 This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asék*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was
593 celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the
585 marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

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593 exclaiming: 'May that man die!' Whenever Nariya went to visit her she used to throw stones at him to drive him away. It was said
585 that she was carrying on a love affair with a Nepali in her distant village. On one occasion the girl's parents came to Lingthem, but Nariya was too shy to say anything. At the end of April Tempa said that he threatened the parents that if they did not send the girl he would apply to the police station. He explained that he spoke after consultation with the Mandal because Nariya's uncle Ashyok had not enough sense.

On May 11th, 1937, Nariya went to fetch his wife home; on May 17th she returned with him but bringing with her a younger brother aged twelve to sleep with her as a chaperone. On May 18th she went away again to Mangan to see her father, but she returned still accompanied by the younger brother on May 20th. On this day took place one of the bi-monthly monastery feasts and Nariya's wife took this opportunity to become formally introduced into the village community. Although she still did not sleep with her husband she seemed to be settling down and was helping in the preparations for the big annual feast of Boom koor which was to take place three days later, helping with the cooking and so on. She did not talk much but sat about quite comfortably in the groups where people made rather a fuss of her. All the time she kept some small child by her, either her own younger brother or Pankek, a little girl of six. She seemed to find comfort in the presence of young children. Tobgé was familiar with her, hugging her and feeling her breasts, but she showed no resentment. She had on a clean new green blouse but a filthy dirty skirt. The general belief was that in a day or so Nariya would succeed in sleeping with her and that then the marriage would settle down completely and happily.

Nariya it is true was not a very attractive character. He had an extraordinarily high-pitched almost eunochoid voice and a slightly sly expression. He was an orphan; his father, when he lived, was the richest man in Lingthem and a great deal of the wealth in cattle had been expended on the funeral feasts for him and many other relations of his generation who had died very close to one another. Nariya wished to regain his father's wealth and was therefore, most exceptionally for a Lepcha, engaged in strenuous
[556] economies, spending as little as he could, except when he had to give feasts, on clothes or food; he was rather secretive.

Of the other recently married men Rigya, Nariya's cousin and

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593 adopted brother, and Kutt'r were now getting on all right with their wives after a preliminary period of conflict in each case lasting about 586 four years. Kutt'r who was eighteen years old was married at the age of fourteen to a wife one month after *asék*, before which he had never met her. She had only come to live with him in the last few months. First of all they disliked one another thoroughly; then by the pressure of their families they were brought to sleep together but did not do anything. Only in the last two or three months have they copulated together; now they like one another.

585 Gongyop's son was born in 1919; he is a very girlish-looking and under-developed boy and preternaturally shy; it will be remembered that he was drinking his mother's milk up to the age of ten. Before *asék* he did not know his wife; *asék* took place about six months ago. The girl is older and bigger than he and at first he was frightened of her, though she spoke nicely to him. On May 19th he returned from his third visit to her at which they had slept together. He came home with a look on his face like a cat which had just been fed on cream and seemed rather proud of himself; he said that now he likes his wife. Datoop's younger son was *asék* by proxy for his elder brother Pichi; but Pichi at the beginning of May definitely refused the marriage and instead the youngest son was going to marry the girl. On May 9th he went off with his father to pay a visit to his bride. I asked the boy what present he was taking to his parents-in-law, at which his father replied 'His present is between his legs'. He was, however, also taking a leg of meat with him. Datoop hoped that, if the harvest was good, the girl would be brought home in the autumn.

On March 19th Mikmar, Chano's eldest son, aged thirteen, was *asék*'d to an unknown girl three or four years older than himself. By May 9th he had paid the girl three visits. They are patently unable to sleep together for Mikmar is still very childish, but they get on well enough together and give each other food.

584 In Lingthem there were only four unmarried girls over the age of twelve; of these Prumtu, the girl with the squint, is likely to wait some time before marrying and Tafoor's eldest daughter has only just passed twelve and has not yet been asked for. The other two girls are the two eldest daughters of Pargetu, aged sixteen and twelve respectively; they have been *asék*'d to two brothers. The 593 younger girl, Tangvoong, gets on well enough with her young husband, but the older one, Kondé, does not; the two both fight

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831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

585 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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of the bride will lie in wait for the groom armed with nettles and other thorny plants and will pretend to drive him away; to be allowed to go on the groom must give them all a present of at least six annas. As soon as the groom has given his presents he returns to his own home, and almost immediately after the bridal procession sets out. 585

The bridal procession consists of twelve people besides the bride; they are (1) her *bek-bu*, (2) an old and experienced man, usually the Mandal of her village, (3) a 'sacrificer', preferably a Mun, (4) a paternal uncle, (5) a maternal uncle, (6) an elder brother, (7) an elder sister or aunt, who is called the bride's friend, (8) a younger sister, (9) a younger brother, and finally three men to carry the presents from the bride which consist of a load of *chi*, a load of popped corn, and a pig. The girl's parents stay behind and play no rôle in their daughter's marriage; for them it is considered to be a sad time, for it marks the formal loss of their child. In the bridal procession the six named relations may always be classificatory ones if there are no 'real' ones available.

Three times on the way to the groom's house the bridal party stops for ceremonial food and drink, which is provided by the groom. The first stop is called *chang yook*, when food and *chi* are provided; the paternal uncle and the sacrificer must drink two *patyoot* of *chi* at this place; the rest may do as they please. The second halt is called *long-so* and there three big bamboo holders of strained *chi* are provided for the party. The final halt is called *Gorshoon*; this is very near the groom's house and here a shed is erected to accommodate the bridal party. As soon as they arrive at this shed another container of strained *chi* is provided.

When the bridal party has entered the temporary shed the girl's *bek-bu* goes into the house with a ceremonial scarf which he offers to the groom's family; if there is a lamaist altar in the house the scarf is put on this. Then the bridal party is regaled on ground rice and *chi* and this is followed by a ceremonial meal called 'wiping away the sweat of the bride' and consisting of eight big handfuls of rice and eight fowls, which are boiled and given to the bride's party and also to the older men and lamas present. Following this the girl's *bek-bu* ceremoniously offers the presents which have been brought in the name of the bride's family to the elders of the groom's family. These presents are received by the old men of the groom's family with a show of great surprise and some indignation: 'Why do you bring these?' they say, 'we only want the

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585 bride and no presents.' The *bek-bu* answers: 'We have brought these to make a sacrifice.' These gifts are then dedicated by a Mun or experienced man; the day after the marriage this dedicated pig and grain will be carefully divided up and all the girl's relations-in-law and the other inhabitants of her new village must eat a small portion; in this way the new wife is formally accepted into the community. Everybody has eaten food of her providing.

Since the bride and her party have usually come from some way away this ceremony generally takes place towards evening and it is followed by a feast after which people go to sleep. Unless the bride is a widow or already the mother of her husband's children she will not enter the groom's house that night but will pass it in the shed which has been specially erected for that purpose.

There may have been some guests present on the first day, but it is the second day which is the really big feast, at which almost everybody in the village will be present.

The lamas arrive about nine o'clock with their books and musical instruments and will take up their position at the right-hand wall of the *dé-ong* against the altar, with one of the Dorjé Lapoon at the end nearest the altar. Intermittently during the whole day they will burn incense and read their books and play on the musical instruments. Except for the ceremony of 'receiving the bride' described lower down, they will only leave their position for a very few minutes at a time to go out and ease themselves. They eat and drink where they pray and from the moment they arrive a *patyoot* of *chi* is placed in front of them, which is constantly replenished and renewed.

Early in the morning the first ox—'the ox for eating'—will be killed and cut up; its ribs are boiled for the feast and sausages are made out of the intestines; the head, right foreleg, left hindleg, and half the sausages are preserved for the bride's family. Then a second ox—the 'ox of the groom'—is tethered fairly near the house but somewhere in the forest—that is not on cultivated land. By this ox is erected by the Mun or sacrificer a sort of altar on which is placed a scarf and a rupee and a big container of strained *chi* and also a bowl with butter at the side from which the strained *chi* will be drunk. Then the Mun dedicates the live ox to all the gods and repeats the long sacred story which tells of the origin of marriage.[6] This prayer and rehearsal of the story takes upwards of three hours; unless somebody wishes to be able to tell the story in his turn, the

[6] See Appendix IV.

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officiating sacrificer will probably be completely neglected. The rest of the company will be talking and eating and drinking. The bride and her party will probably remain fairly isolated in their shed. When the sacred story is finished the bride and groom and the bride's party and the groom's party are all summoned to the Mun's altar. Then the Mun calls on all the gods of the neighbourhood and prays to them not to be angry but to let everybody enjoy the ox which is going to be killed and to bless the married couple and give them many children. He then turns to the bride and groom and preaches a sermon to them, telling them to love one another and not to quarrel; if they separate may the ox they are going to eat burn and poison them. After that he hands to the bride the buttered bowl filled with strained *chi*; she sips it three times and after each sip the bowl is refilled as each sip is a symbolic emptying of the bowl. After the bride the groom drinks, and then the members of the bride's party and the groom's party in turn take three ceremonial sips from a smaller buttered bowl. This drinking of the buttered *chi* is really the sacramental consecration of the marriage and represents a pact of friendship between the bride and her new family and village.

When the ceremony has been completed the ox of the groom is killed with a bow and arrow. It is absolutely necessary that the wife's younger brother, or if she has not got one the nearest possible classificatory younger brother, should kill this ox; if anybody else were to do it the bride's family have to pay a fine of Rs. 5 to the groom's family. The ox is shot twice from a very short distance and an attempt is made to pierce the heart behind the left foreleg. It is a very messy way of killing an ox, which takes about a quarter of an hour to die. When the ox is finally dead the bride's younger brother pours water over its muzzle after which this ox is also cut up. The meat from this ox is not consumed at the feast; the head and one of the hind legs will be taken back to the wife's family as well as half the intestines turned into sausages; the rest of the meat will be cut up and divided and given away as parting presents to all the guests.

After this ceremony the bride and her party are conducted by the two *bek-bu* into the *dé-ong*, where they take up their special positions against the left-hand wall facing the lamas. These positions are, starting from the altar, the old and experienced man, the sacrificer, the paternal uncle, the maternal uncle, the elder brother, the 'bride's friend', the bride, the younger sister and the

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585 younger brother; on the opposite side with the lamas are, starting from the same direction, the Mandal, a *youmi*, a paternal uncle and the groom. Standing between the two parties are the *bek-bu* of the bride and the groom.

When the two parties are settled the two *bek-bu* make a collection of money from every guest; each guest should give at the very least a ceremonial scarf and a rupee; those who can will give more. The husband's *bek-bu* makes a list of all the gifts given and the return presents of meat are apportioned roughly in proportion to the money given. When the money is collected it is divided up by the two *bek-bu*, the greater part going to the bride's party who have to receive Rs. 3 each, with the exception of the paternal uncle who gets Rs. 4 and the bride's friend who gets Rs. 6. The *bek-bu* receive Rs. 5 each. If there is any excess of the money it goes to the married couple, but if there is a deficiency the husband has to make up the required sum out of his own pocket. After this the *dé-ong* is cleared except for the parties of the bride and groom. In the kitchen a Mun of the husband's village will be calling on the gods. Just before the ceremony starts a ceremonial meal of a boiled pig's head and chickens is partaken of by both parties.

Then is performed the ceremony of 'receiving the bride'; in this ceremony the man's *bek-bu* plays no rôle. The conversation chiefly takes place between the girl's *bek-bu*, her uncles, and the bridegroom's party. The girl's *bek-bu* takes a scarf in one hand and a rupee in the other and addresses the girl as follows: 'You have been married into —— *ptso*; now you are bound to them and if you had any other lovers you must leave them; now you have no connection with people other than this *ptso*. In the beginning Tarbong-bo and Naripnom and Komsi*thing* originated marriage and so we perform it today. Now you are bound.' With these words the girl's *bek-bu* puts a scarf round her bowed neck and the rupee into her joined hands and then the girl's *bek-bu* sits down.

After this the Mandal will ask the bride who are her special *moong* and *rum* (devils and gods) and what sacrifices are necessary. Should she say there are none, or keep silent, the *youmi* will say, 'Don't tell a lie; we know there must be at least one *rum* and one *moong* and if you have children and they get ill a Mun or a lama will find out what supernaturals you have brought here; so speak up and tell the truth.' After that someone on the girl's side, most probably her paternal or maternal uncle, will tell who are her private supernaturals and what are the sacrifices necessary for them.

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[415]

ONGDEN'S WEDDING

Above : Ongden in a clean dress. Behind him old Adér.

Below : The feast.

[facing p. 336]

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585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary
522 *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shet*—a prayer for future children.

585 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to
533 feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the
535 ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

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585 the song beginning, 'Father, help me! Mother, help me!' The dancing is completely unorganised, and merely consists of indi-
533 viduals hopping or stamping more or less rhythmically as they feel
535 disposed. Unlimited food and drink are provided, and it is considered desirable and almost inevitable that everybody should get as drunk as possible. There is a strong sexual overtone to the atmosphere and towards evening many couples separate and go off into the forest for a short spell; they mostly return to the house where the feast is being held before night has completely fallen.

585 At the only marriage feast that I witnessed—that of Ongden with his second wife—I noted 'About seven o'clock the noise was exactly like a very crowded English pub at closing time: the atmosphere was unbelievable. Nearly a hundred very dirty people in two small rooms which had been shut up as much as possible with the balconies closed by wooden partitions and so on; there was a huge fire of wet wood smoking hard so that one could only just see across the room. In the kitchen some people were sleeping round the fire while others were still cooking; at one side there was a very bloody mess where sausages were being made from the entrails by three young men; others were asleep in the muck. In the *dé-ong* the ground was so crowded with sitters and sleepers that there was only just room for the female relations of the husband to circulate with their wooden ladles of boiling water with which they constantly replenished the bowls of *chi*; they appeared to be the only relatively sober people present. The bride and her party sat as if they had never moved, in their long line against the wall of the *dé-ong*; the groom wandered about rather disconsolately, talking very little to anyone. Old Adér, who had previously pulled up his dress and exposed himself during the sacrifice, started singing in a minor key dragging over the syllables; whereupon Lumba's *jethi* (that is his first wife), who is renowned as a singer, got up and asked for some meat to be given her as a fee for the song she was going to sing; she was given some and started singing, but nobody took much notice though everybody said "hush"; the singers walked about as if they were cabaret artists. The pace of the evening got slower and slower and sleepier and sleepier; the children sat about or slept. It would have been very rude for anybody to go home before sunrise the next day.'

585 This marriage of Ongden with a widow was slightly irregular
587 and abbreviated, first because it was for both parties a second marriage, and secondly because the bride had been living with her

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husband for some months before he had assembled enough food for the ceremony. The ceremony only took place for one day instead of for two and the bride and her party went straight away on arrival into the house. The day before the marriage the bride withdrew to a village one day's walk away instead of to her own home which was three days away, where she met her bridal party. After the ceremony the post-nuptial visits were curtailed, but it was considered improper for the newly married couple to start living at home at once and so they spent a few days at the house of his 'nephew' Tingkep. 585 587

Early in the morning after the marriage feast the bride and groom, together with the bride's party and two friends of the groom to carry the heads and legs of the oxen, set out on a return visit to the bride's house. When they have arrived the groom stops as little time as possible; overnight if the bride's home is some way away, otherwise not even that. On that day all the guests who were present at the marriage feast return with gifts of crops or *chi*, which they give according to their wish and ability as a help towards the very considerable expense of the marriage feast. 585

Two weeks later the groom goes to fetch his bride again. Either at this visit or at the subsequent one the girl's father provides a feast for the newly married couple. When the bride and groom leave the girl's house her father sends back as a present to the man's father a load of *chi* and a load of rice. The couple then stop a week in the husband's house; at the end of that time they go back to the girl's house, taking with them as presents to the girl's parents from the groom's parents exactly the same presents as the girl herself had brought. The couple then spend a few days at the bride's home and then finally return to the groom's. At this final removal the girl brings with her such private property as she may possess in the shape of animals or harvested grain as well as her clothes and jewels.

Some time during the first year of marriage the bride may go to visit her parents with a present of a pig and they will in return give her a milch cow or a heifer. This does not always take place, usually only if the bride's parents are relatively rich.

If the horoscopes of the married pair are unfavourable or if ill-luck is foretold, this ill-luck can be temporarily averted in the following way: two lamas will make small millet images of the husband and wife called *parr-ko* and into these the lamas will transfer all the ill-luck which is foreseen in the sacred books. When 585 777

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585 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their
777 own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat
592 subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [391]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

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for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so. In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living. She has better jewellery than any other women in the village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 The following calendar shows the arrangement of agricultural work throughout the year. It starts with February, which is the first month of the Tibetan year:

February:	Clear ground and sow buckwheat in the lower parts of the valley.
March:	Clear ground and sow dry rice, millet, and a little maize.
April:	Clear ground in the higher places and sow more dry rice, millet, barley and wheat; the last two being sown together as a mixed crop.
May:	Reap buckwheat, and sow more millet and maize.
June:	Plant rice terraces. Weed dry rice. This is the worst month for food shortage.
July:	Sow more millet and also buckwheat. General weeding.
August:	Reap the first rice terraces, and prepare drying sheds for cardamoms. Sow more buckwheat.
September:	Reap dry rice and cardamoms. This is done mostly by the men, as it is heavy work. At the same time the women reap the millet.
October:	Sow barley and wheat, also onions. Continue reaping the cardamom crop.
November:	Clear ground for buckwheat. Make arrangements to sell the cardamom harvest.
December:	Continue to dispose of cardamoms. Women start to prepare the ground for buckwheat. This is the slackest month of the year.
January:	Sow buckwheat.

* * * * *

585 Most marriages take place in October, November, and December, as during these three months money and plenty of food are available, and work is light. House-building and

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chut*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with

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nettles, which they have previously gathered against their arrival. As soon as the *Sarong chut* is handed over the party is allowed to enter the house, where it spends the rest of the day and night feasting and drinking. The pork is consumed by the women only, and the men receive no share of it.

When the bridegroom's party arrives it is given a light meal of tea and parched rice, followed, of course, by the inevitable *chi*. Later on a special ceremonial meal known as *Sohol set zo-kup* is served which consists of cooked rice, pork, and two chickens, one of which is eaten by the bridegroom and the other by the bride's attendants.

Early the next morning the party returns to the boy's home. It is now augmented by the bride and her attendants, who are as follows:

Kegu Numbu:	He is the leader of the bride's party and should be an elderly and experienced man. The office is usually performed by some near relative.
Rum fat-bo:	A sacrificer. He makes the necessary offerings to the gods and is usually a Mun.
Aku:	The bride's younger paternal uncle.
Ajyong:	One or other of the bride's mother's brothers.
Changku:	Some elderly friend of the family and preferably a man of standing in the village. His duties are to prepare and distribute the meat at the wedding feast.
Nyom Moo:	One or other of the bride's mother's sisters.
Nyom Chimbu:	Bridesmaid. The bride's sister often undertakes this duty; but she must be unmarried.
Nyom Faming:	Bride's brother: younger, if possible. He represents all her male relatives.
Faming Tyol:	Male attendant upon the *Nyom Faming*.

In addition to the above there are also a number of men to

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585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

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The bride's *Pi-bo* stands with a ceremonial scarf in one 585
hand and a rupee in the other, and addresses her as follows:

"You have now married into the X clan: now you are bound to its members; and if you have any lovers now is the time to drop them, for in future you should have no such connections outside your new family. In the beginning of all things Tarbong and Komsi originated marriage, and carried out the ceremony as we are doing it to-day. Now are you bound."

As he says these words he places the scarf round the bride's neck and puts the rupee into her joined hands and sits down again. The Mandal now asks the girl the names of her family gods and demons, and what sacrifices should be made to them, although these are, of course, already known to all concerned. Should she remain silent, or reply that she has none, some old man of the bridegroom's village will say to her: "You must not tell lies: we know perfectly well that you must have at least one personal god and demon; so speak up and tell us their names. Moreover, if later on you have any children and they get ill the Mun will certainly be able to find out who their supernaturals are, so you might just as well tell us the names now and be done with it."

If the girl still remains silent her *Aku* or *Ajyong* will reply for her, after which she is formally handed over to the bridegroom, the necessary conversation being carried out by means of somewhat obscene periphrases, of which the following are typical examples:

"Now we hand this egg (i.e. the bride) over to you, so look 585
after it carefully." It sometimes happens that the bride is 522
older than the boy, in which case a suitable reply to the above remark would be: "Very many thanks for the gift: but the egg does not look exactly new-laid."

If the girl is of such an age that it is likely that she has had many lovers someone will probably remark: "She certainly looks a little shop-soiled; and I imagine that her pubic hair is as long as Sor Mung's tresses." To this the correct reply is: "Well, you see, the fact is we have carefully shelled the eggs so

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585 that it will be all the easier to eat." But to this the retort is:
522 "Yes: quite so. But it is obvious that the egg has not been freshly shelled."

This sort of banter is continued until neither party can think of anything fresh to say. All the time it is going on the bride hangs her head demurely and covers her face with her hands in order to hide her blushes (if any): but since most of the assembled company are by this time distinctly drink-taken, to say the least of it, nobody takes any offence and the whole ceremony is conducted with the utmost good nature.

585 After this a special dish called *Hik zo-kup* is served to the bridal party and the assembled Lamas, should any be present. It consists of eight fowls cooked with rice. In the portion given to the bride there should be one leg which has been cooked complete, with the claws still on. Following this *Mon zo-kup*, which consists of pork and rice, is served: like the previous dish it too is not offered to the general company. While this is going on the presents brought by the bride (the pig's carcass, etc.) are brought in and put down in front of the altar. Now two old men of the bridegroom's village stand up and offer the *Nyom Kyomo*, as the present is called, to the gods. They turn towards the altar and tell the gods that the present has been brought by such-and-such a girl, who has come to live in the house from this time onwards. They then offer the gift in the same manner to the Lamas, who signify their assent by nodding their heads. The *Nyom Kyom* is then taken up and put away in the next room.

A general meal of meat, rice, vegetables, and so on is now served to everybody, including the bride and bridegroom, who both eat out of the same plate on this occasion. By the time it is finished it will probably be already dark, but nobody thinks of going home. Some of the guests continue drinking throughout the night; others fall asleep where they sit. Every square inch of the floor is occupied and the atmosphere is like nothing so much as a London fog: nobody minds.

Early the following morning everyone is roused with *chi*, a

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bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after." When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook Zo*, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to everybody present; but each member of the bride's party receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot such members of the party as are still capable of walking now proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of argument now follows, in which various men express their opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side. He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

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585 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and
431 one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be
585 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as
466 follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank
[431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

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This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom*.

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi*. Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu*, or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku*, who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong*, which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len*, which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

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585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

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587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

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583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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[582] 583 future father-in-law, the parties being often united before the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the ●585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste, 581 [584] and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the 462 father's country. All the labours of the house, the field, [567] and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been [751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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It-lyang."[38] This myth is interesting because it relates, in the first place, the two efforts made by God to create man, and secondly because it relates how God brought the woman into the life of the man, by placing her in some mysterious way in the snare set by man to catch birds. 773

According to another myth the genealogy of mankind is even more complicated. Among the various creatures that were created as It-mo's children, there is also Takbo-thing, who hitherto had been designated as the god of creation. Ta-she is added to the name with whom we shall become more closely acquainted later on. "The last two to be born were Takbo-thing and Nazong-ngyu, and although these were brother and sister, they became husband and wife and had many children."[39] These children however were evil spirits and demons. They were not nourished by their mother, but were disowned and driven away. They live not on the earth but outside the earth. The reason why monsters were born out of this wedlock was surely due to the forbidden and irregular marriage between brother and sister. Rum then separated them. After the separation a human being was born. The mother loved this child deeply and fed it at her breast. When the other children perceived this they grew very jealous, hated the child intensely and so it died. The grief-stricken mother sent two birds up to Tak-bo-thing in order to fetch from him the Water of Life and the Water of Death. Tak-bo-thing gave them both the waters and instructed them about the use of the waters. On their return flight the birds decided not to use the directions as they had been given to them but to reverse them. And so it happens that men die and are always born again. Rum stands as a symbol to man. The Mung demons, on the contrary, do not die, and a priest-magician, Bong-thing, was sent to keep them under control. Only then was it possible for man to live on the earth. He is called Tar-bong-mu. As he was catching birds one day he found a fairy, the daughter of the Lha-ma-yin.[40] He forcibly took this beautiful Na-rib-nom as his wife. To avoid the misfortune consequent [585]

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38. op. cit. p. 355 sq.
39. op. cit. p. 346.
40. Tibetan name for Titans.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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776 to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage
585 ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment
373 play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 354.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the
unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he
793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/-. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman
[586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapōn* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

586 property, animals and children. If there is only one daughter the parents will divide her marriage price; she can live with either. If there is only one son the spouse keeping him must pay to the other Rs. 40, a cow and a pig and if the father keeps him a length of cloth to the wife, if the wife keeps him a copper vessel[9] to the husband. The last formal divorce in Lingthem was that of the first Dorjé Lapoon from his third and fourth wives (see Chapter Sixteen); a distant 'aunt' of the Mandal's was also divorced in this way in Sakhyong but there were no children.

If a woman runs away the husband's relatives will come for her and ask for her back or else claim the marriage price; but if the wife is unsatisfactory the husband will merely claim and get compensation in the form of the head and two legs of an ox and a scarf and rupee. Should such a girl re-marry a representative of the husband goes to the marriage; if the representative is the maternal uncle he is given Rs. 3 and half a leg of an ox; if the paternal uncle, Rs. 5 and the rump. By a recent decision of the twelve Mandals of Zongu in council it has been decided that these small recompenses shall be generally accepted for a runaway wife, instead of the large sums demanded earlier.

In the event of a woman showing a marked and continued preference for some man not her husband, the husband will almost always let her go to the lover. If the man cannot be classified as a 'younger brother' he must pay to the injured husband all the marriage expenses which he himself had paid earlier; or alternatively the girl's family will provide another girl as a substitute without further payment, but in that case the payments which the husband would have recovered from the lover will go to the girl's parents. If the lover is classifiable as a 'younger brother' the wife will probably be given to him for a small symbolical payment without any formalities; but it is understood that the younger brother will give special help if the elder brother remarries. Adultery, without really marked preference, is not a reason for divorce; and no anxiety is felt or expressed about the paternity of a man's children.

vi

581 In Lepcha theory marriage is not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups; and they have

[436] [9] A copper pot is the most conspicuous Lepcha valuable: it is used in a great number of sociological transactions.

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 6

Some Lepcha Personalities

159 IT is time now to introduce some Lingtem personalities; and it will be convenient to start with the Church. The details of these brief biographies were not in every case contributed by the individual concerned; for, as with us, some Lepchas prefer to tell of others rather than to talk about themselves. I always felt apologetic when asking for these personal details. How many of us, I wonder, would care to impart the more intimate details of our private lives to a stranger, and one of an alien culture at that? In actual fact, however, most Lepchas have no reticence about such matters, and are not in the least offended if one refers to their illegitimate children, or asks for the names of the women with whom they are on intimate terms.

* * * * *

The senior Dorje-Lopön of Lingtem was a man of almost saintly appearance. Ascetic-looking and upright, you would have said that here was one who had long since cast off the cares of the flesh, but actually he could have given points to Casanova. When we first met him he was well over eighty years of age, but still spent most of the day helping in the fields. He first married when he was quite a young man, but tiring of his wife, by whom he had one son, he transferred his affections to a girl he liked better. He found the new wife so much to his liking, that, leaving his son in the care of the first, he forsook her and ran off to Darjeeling with the second. He came back one year later, and on his return his first wife's relatives attempted to bring about a reconciliation. This, 159 however, was unsuccessful, since the Dorje-Lopön had 586 completely tired of his first wife. All efforts having failed, she

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 wife. It appears that in such cases the first wife's feelings
595 are not in any way considered, and the *Thim seut* is given, not to appease her but to prevent her becoming ill, which might otherwise be the case.

586 If a man wishes to divorce his wife he must pay eight-eighty rupees in cash to her father and give her one-half of all his movable property. This is known as *Gay-top*. Children also are divided between the two parents by mutual arrangement. Should there be an only daughter her eventual marriage price will be divided between the parents; and in the case of an only son it is usual for him to remain with his father, who pays the mother an additional forty rupees, one cow, one pig and a length of cloth for this privilege. A daughter may live with either parent; but whatever the decision, the question of payment does not in her case arise. In exceptional circumstances it may be arranged that a son shall remain with his mother, and in this case she gives the above presents to her husband, substituting an ox for the cow and a copper pot for the length of cloth.

There are no cases of divorce in Lingtem within living memory, nor does it often happen elsewhere; but in view of the constitution of Lepcha society there would appear to be little need of divorce, since it fulfils no useful function.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'. 584

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7] 582 584

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made. 584 [587]

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in 582 582 431

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a set of rules by which the union can be continued despite the death of one of the partners. These rules are not uncommon in non-European societies and have been given the technical terms of levirate, by which a man marries his deceased elder brother's wife, and sororate, by which a woman marries her deceased elder sister's husband. The Lepchas employ both of these devices, but their application is very different, and the levirate claims are much more strongly pressed. 581

In Lepcha theory the husband's group purchases the wife, as is explicitly recognised in the term 'price of the bride', *nyom-sa afaar*, which is used for the *asék* presents; therefore if the husband dies the wife is still the property of his group, and can be married to another member of the same group without further reference to her parents, though on such occasions the wife's parents are actually given small courtesy presents. In theory too the wife has no right to refuse the man offered in the place of her dead husband, or, if she feels an unconquerable repulsion, her group should supply a second woman to replace her. Similarly if the husband wishes to refuse the wife he has inherited he should supply another man in place of himself. In practice these regulations are not always carried out, and relatively seldom if the woman is childless; if the heritable spouse really dislikes her inheritor no compulsion is used to force her to marry him, nor are there any sanctions for this; three women formerly married to inhabitants of Lingthem have in recent years returned to their own homes on the death of their husbands because they did not like their inheritors, or because their inheritors did not like them. In such cases, if the women remarry, the marriage payments are made, not to their family group, but to the family groups of their dead husbands. 587

The sororate claims are enforced rather differently. On the forty-ninth day after the death of his wife the widower must visit his parents-in-law, taking with him as presents a load of *chi* and a pig; on the receipt of which the parents-in-law consult with all their male relatives and offer him as wife another girl, preferably a real or classificatory younger sister of the first wife. If the man does not wish to accept the offered girl (and if there is nobody else suitable sometimes babies are offered) on the following day he must present his wife's parents with an ox, or, failing that, a pig, a load of *chi*, a big basket of rice and Rs. 5, and ask their permission to refuse the girl and to marry, if he feels so inclined,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

● 587 into another *ptso*. After the presents this permission is always given automatically.

If the man accepts the girl offered the *asék* is performed one year after the death of the first wife, and the marriage usually shortly after. For second marriages the ceremonies are similar to first marriages but on a rather smaller scale; both the presents and the feasts are only about two-thirds as expensive as for first marriages. When widows remarry the ceremony is slightly altered, and the bride enters her husband's house on the first, instead of the second, day of the marriage feast. Except for sororate spouses it is considered rather difficult for a widower to get an unmarried girl for his second wife, especially if his first wife died young, for this is believed to be a sign that he is unlucky; consequently it is fairly usual for widowers to marry widows. The situation is naturally altered if a widower makes an unmarried woman pregnant.

837 587 Among the Lepchas a man can inherit the wives of all his *elder* brothers, real or classificatory, the wives of all his paternal and maternal uncles real or classificatory, provided these 'uncles' are younger than his parents but not younger than himself, and all the *younger* sisters of his wife, real or classificatory. Conversely a woman can be inherited by all her husband's younger brothers, all the sons of her husband's uncles, and all the husbands of her elder sisters, real or classificatory. With all these potentially hereditable spouses the Lepcha has the right to copulate during the lifetime of their husbands (or wives) and in nearly all cases these rights are taken full advantage of, as opportunity offers; opportunity is naturally greater with people who live in the same district, and distance often prevents men taking advantage of the right to sleep with the younger sisters of their wife, and women with the husbands of their older sisters, since they most often live in different parts of the country.

837 With the wives of their real elder brothers Lepchas have in theory a right to use force, if they will not copulate willingly; the younger brothers are considered to have contributed to the marriage price of the bride and therefore to have, as it were, a legal right. In point of fact such a use of force never arises; Lepcha women know that their husbands' younger brothers have the right of access; and casual sexual relationships are so unimportant emotionally for Lepchas that few women would think it worth while making a fuss. If the women have a real repulsion for their husband's younger brothers nothing can be done about it, for,

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582 835 will also be his wife's elder sister and equated with his mother-in-law; similarly the elder brother will not have access to or be able to marry his wife's younger sister, because she is equated with his daughter-in-law. If there was an interval between the first and second marriages both parties would have the right of access until the second *aséк*; to avoid such complication it is desirable that the marriages of pairs of brothers and sisters take place as nearly simultaneously as is possible.

The semi-diagrammatic complementary relations which are set up when two brothers marry and have sons are worth tabulating. The elder brother has to respect his younger brother's wife as his 'daughter-in-law', but his son need not as he can sleep with and inherit her; the younger brother need not respect his elder brother's wife as he can sleep with and inherit her, but his son must respect her as his 'big mother'.

● 587 In the event of a widow being left with young children it is essential that a husband be supplied from her husband's group, and this is usually done without any sort of friction. Thus Chano, himself a childless widower, recently inherited the wife and three young children of his dead elder brother. This is the one situation in which the provision of a levirate spouse is imperative; if the widow is sterile or the children all grown up and married there is no compulsion and such women often return to their own home. Not always however; at the age of 68 the second Dorjé Lapoon married *en secondes noces* his widowed 'aunt' (actually the wife of his grandmother's brother's son) Pumri, who was then aged 73. The two had however carried on a fairly constant concubinage in the last forty years of Pumri's husband's lifetime.

The chief disadvantage of the sororate and levirate claims is that it quite occasionally happens that there is considerable disparity between the ages of the spouses, and in particular that the woman will be considerably older than the man. A relatively poor family is liable to hand on a satisfactory woman even to a boy of nine or ten; the converse seldom occurs as a man will not accept a very young girl as a second wife. During my stay in Lingthem such a case was causing considerable dispute. Kahlyeu's grandson, Chélé, at the age of ten had inherited the wife of a dead younger uncle. This girl had only been married a year before the death of her husband, and was at the time only fifteen, but the psychological difference in their ages was far greater than the real difference. Chélé was a very bright and intelligent little boy, but

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

nervous and physically thin and rather undersized. He was remarkable for having an almost complete memory of all that had happened to him after the age of eighteen months. Unlike the vast majority of Lepcha children he showed a marked disinclination to grow up, and appeared happiest playing in the company of children younger than himself. His mother died about three years ago, and when he was about six his father committed suicide by eating arrow poison and attempted drowning, after he had been publicly reprimanded by his wife's family for neglecting her while she was ill. After the death of his parents Chélé lived alone with his grandfather and a middle-aged distantly related 'aunt'.

587 ● [762]

As opposed to Chélé's psychological backwardness his wife, a younger sister of the Mandal's first wife, was somewhat advanced for her age and appeared a fully-developed self-possessed young woman. After the death of her first husband she had gone home to her family for a year, but in May 1937 she returned to take up life with her husband, staying for the time being with her elder sister. Chélé did not want to get married at all, and would run away from his wife whenever he saw her. Old Kahlyeu used to run after him and gave him extremely severe beatings to bring him to his senses; but Chélé was obstinate, and when he was scolded, used to threaten to drown himself in the river. A few children occasionally make such suicide threats when they are publicly reproached or consider themselves ill-used (most of the children I know of who make or have made such threats have exceptional early histories, usually orphans or adopted children) but these threats are never taken seriously and there is no instance of a child putting such threats into action. But with Chélé people are a trifle anxious; he is an abnormal child, with his exceptional intelligence and babyish behaviour.

The situation did not advance in any way while I was observing it. Chélé continued obstinate; his wife seemed fairly placid and non-attached about the whole affair, but even presuming the two do live together the situation is naturally somewhat unstable. A few years ago Takneum *youmi*'s son Itup inherited a wife under rather similar circumstances; when he was twelve his wife became pregnant with an obvious bastard. This wife died young and Itup married again; the bastard, Seryop Katoo, was brought up as a younger brother of Itup. It also occasionally happens, as in the case of Kurma's stepfather, that a man is childless because he has inherited a wife near the menopause.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

vii

587 595 If, after a number of years of marriage, a man's wife is sterile, he has a right to apply to his wife's family for a second wife, providing his first wife agrees. The formalities entailed in this request are the same as those which have to be performed after the death of a first wife;[12] an extra preliminary present has to be given, but the subsequent expenses for the marriage are slightly less. In theory it is only permissible to take a second wife from the first wife's *ptso*, and ideally this second wife should be the first wife's real or classificatory younger sister. This is recognised in the terms with [601] which co-wives are always referred to; the Nepali words *jethi* and *kanchi*, meaning 'eldest sister' and 'youngest sister' are always used; Lepcha has no equivalent terms to indicate the position of a child in the order of birth. In the great majority of cases the ideal conditions are observed, and the two wives, if not actual sisters, are of the same *ptso* and use kinship terms. In cultural theory the co-wives have already an established habit of cooperation and cohabitation which only needs to be renewed, and the situation of co-wife is meant to be an agreeable one. This expectation is not always justified; occasionally co-wives quarrel; but the majority are glad for the companionship of a close relative, and the lessened work which their presence means. The husband is meant to spend alternate nights with each of them.

595 In Lingthem there are seven men with two wives each; but only in three cases was the second wife taken because the first wife was sterile. In two of the cases the second wife is indeed only a co-wife by courtesy; Asang gave a home to the middle-aged widow of his elder brother, because she had nowhere else to go; and for the same reason Gongyop took in his wife's sister. In this second case the hospitality was not long accepted; though nearly sixty years old, this woman, Samblyou, with her elder sister Mrs. Takal, is the most promiscuous woman in the village, and after distributing her favours in nearly every direction, including the seduction of a number of the younger boys, she is now cohabiting with Zumba, a widower twelve years younger than herself.

Chala Mandal has had in all four wives in two pairs; the first wife he gave to a 'younger brother', who lived with him; after her death he also gave him her equally sterile sister; this second wife returned to her family after the death of the

[12] See p. 159.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

585 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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585 the song beginning, 'Father, help me! Mother, help me!' The dancing is completely unorganised, and merely consists of indi-
533 viduals hopping or stamping more or less rhythmically as they feel
535 disposed. Unlimited food and drink are provided, and it is considered desirable and almost inevitable that everybody should get as drunk as possible. There is a strong sexual overtone to the atmosphere and towards evening many couples separate and go off into the forest for a short spell; they mostly return to the house where the feast is being held before night has completely fallen.

585 At the only marriage feast that I witnessed—that of Ongden with his second wife—I noted 'About seven o'clock the noise was exactly like a very crowded English pub at closing time: the atmosphere was unbelievable. Nearly a hundred very dirty people in two small rooms which had been shut up as much as possible with the balconies closed by wooden partitions and so on; there was a huge fire of wet wood smoking hard so that one could only just see across the room. In the kitchen some people were sleeping round the fire while others were still cooking; at one side there was a very bloody mess where sausages were being made from the entrails by three young men; others were asleep in the muck. In the *dé-ong* the ground was so crowded with sitters and sleepers that there was only just room for the female relations of the husband to circulate with their wooden ladles of boiling water with which they constantly replenished the bowls of *chi*; they appeared to be the only relatively sober people present. The bride and her party sat as if they had never moved, in their long line against the wall of the *dé-ong*; the groom wandered about rather disconsolately, talking very little to anyone. Old Adér, who had previously pulled up his dress and exposed himself during the sacrifice, started singing in a minor key dragging over the syllables; whereupon Lumba's *jethi* (that is his first wife), who is renowned as a singer, got up and asked for some meat to be given her as a fee for the song she was going to sing; she was given some and started singing, but nobody took much notice though everybody said "hush"; the singers walked about as if they were cabaret artists. The pace of the evening got slower and slower and sleepier and sleepier; the children sat about or slept. It would have been very rude for anybody to go home before sunrise the next day.'

585 This marriage of Ongden with a widow was slightly irregular
587 and abbreviated, first because it was for both parties a second marriage, and secondly because the bride had been living with her

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husband for some months before he had assembled enough food for the ceremony. The ceremony only took place for one day instead of for two and the bride and her party went straight away on arrival into the house. The day before the marriage the bride withdrew to a village one day's walk away instead of to her own home which was three days away, where she met her bridal party. After the ceremony the post-nuptial visits were curtailed, but it was considered improper for the newly married couple to start living at home at once and so they spent a few days at the house of his 'nephew' Tingkep.

Early in the morning after the marriage feast the bride and groom, together with the bride's party and two friends of the groom to carry the heads and legs of the oxen, set out on a return visit to the bride's house. When they have arrived the groom stops as little time as possible; overnight if the bride's home is some way away, otherwise not even that. On that day all the guests who were present at the marriage feast return with gifts of crops or *chi*, which they give according to their wish and ability as a help towards the very considerable expense of the marriage feast.

Two weeks later the groom goes to fetch his bride again. Either at this visit or at the subsequent one the girl's father provides a feast for the newly married couple. When the bride and groom leave the girl's house her father sends back as a present to the man's father a load of *chi* and a load of rice. The couple then stop a week in the husband's house; at the end of that time they go back to the girl's house, taking with them as presents to the girl's parents from the groom's parents exactly the same presents as the girl herself had brought. The couple then spend a few days at the bride's home and then finally return to the groom's. At this final removal the girl brings with her such private property as she may possess in the shape of animals or harvested grain as well as her clothes and jewels.

Some time during the first year of marriage the bride may go to visit her parents with a present of a pig and they will in return give her a milch cow or a heifer. This does not always take place, usually only if the bride's parents are relatively rich.

If the horoscopes of the married pair are unfavourable or if ill-luck is foretold, this ill-luck can be temporarily averted in the following way: two lamas will make small millet images of the husband and wife called *parr-ko* and into these the lamas will transfer all the ill-luck which is foreseen in the sacred books. When

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amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
●587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok,
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

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159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head.
[582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction.
[593] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in
[587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill.
[861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

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587 428 *Oong-op* who is prepared to accept her, then the new husband inherits her. Such cases do not often happen, and only then, I think, because, while customary law is quite clear on the point of widow inheritance, there is no means by which it can be enforced. The system of widow inheritance is considered very objectionable by "civilised" Lepchas, and in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts has been completely dropped, even among the non-Christian community; but there is no doubt that it is a satisfactory method of providing for widows in a community which does not permit women to inherit property; and it is certainly less hypocritical than the Hindu system, for instance, in which a widow remains on in the house but does not actually marry any of her deceased husband's brothers. The Lepcha system does at least recognise and regularise the needs of the body; for no one but an ascetic would expect a young (and perhaps attractive) widow to remain chaste for the rest of her life, whatever tribal law had to say on the subject.

It sometimes happens that a widow has no *Oong-op*. Should she be of an age which makes it unlikely that she will procure another husband in the ordinary way, she may go and live with an elder sister, always provided that the latter's husband is willing to receive her. This arrangement, once again, does not call for any very great readjustment; for, as we have already seen, this man too has always had the legal right to copulate with her. But there are always a certain number of middle-aged widowers who find it difficult to persuade a young girl to marry them, human nature being what it is, and so it happens that a widow in these circumstances often marries some older man who has lost his wife and wishes to marry again. The whole system seems admirably constituted so as to provide for everybody. A few actual examples will perhaps help to make the working of it clear:

587 Chano and his elder brother lived together in one house. Both were married; but Chano's wife died childless some years ago. In the meantime Chano had, of course, the right

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to sleep with his brother's wife whenever he wished. A few 587 years ago the elder brother died. His widow and her three children passed to Chano, and he was thus able to continue his normal life without the expense of remarriage, and with the minimum of readjustment. The children always referred to Chano as their father and he regarded them as his own. The relations within this particular family were so normal and harmonious that it was some considerable time before we realised that Chano was not actually the father of the children.

Here is an example of a different kind:

Gongyop was already fifty when the husband of his wife's younger sister died. There was no one to inherit her; nor was she particularly attractive, so in the circumstances Gongyop felt obliged to offer her a home. He was a sick man at the time, and possibly found one wife sufficient. This, however, was not to the lady's liking; for although she was well over forty and had a grown-up son of her own, she did not consider this sufficient reason for spending her nights alone. She soon struck up an acquaintance with Zumbu, a well-to-do childless widower, who lived in a nearby house. He in the meantime had been betrothed to a girl some years younger than himself. It was a good match for her, since Zumbu was a hard worker and owned considerable property: she would have presided over the affairs of one of the best houses in Lingtem, and was accounted lucky. For some obscure reason, however, she fell in love with Aga, an unattractive man of thirty-seven, with a wall eye and a hideous squint. He had, moreover, a pretty wife of his own, who had already borne him three children. He refused to listen to his wife's entreaties and insisted upon bringing Zumbu's betrothed to live in the house. He cannot at present marry her, since the village elders have so far been unable to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the case. Having been formally betrothed to Zumbu she is to all intents and purposes already his wife; but, as everybody knows, it is easy to take the horse to the water, so to speak, but you cannot

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●587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open. [626] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 428 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

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Gyatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
has turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
happily together. It should be noted that, technically speaking, he might be said to have married his younger brother's wife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be remembered, however, that the girl was first married to his elder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to have married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his second wife. His father died when he was a baby, whereupon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live in some other village, leaving him to the care of his grandfather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later, having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen, is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582]
living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to cooperate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years' time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time. No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation* (June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

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585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

A ●587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

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587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has
[177] struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's
[781] ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had
[534] instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of
[273] small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
[781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

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cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587●
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [781]
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself
came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of
the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any
way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's
Pi-bo got up and made a short speech. While this was in
progress general conversation ceased: but before it was
finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [831]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking
again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony
of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed.
By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest
was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in
the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms
were now completely filled with people and the smoke was
so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the
room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin
state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring
peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [521]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of
drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still
talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived
Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the
same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the
crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front
of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce
anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene,
since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal
was being prepared and would later be served to all the
guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among
the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight
in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

2: Morris I-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

124 The first Dorjé Lapoon I saw very little of, and his history was told to me, partly by Kurma, and partly by his son Datoop. He was a very old man and spent most of his time alone in the field-house where he lived looked after by his younger son. I also learned from Kurma that portion of Jiroong's life which was involved in the scandal of his first wife and the Dorjé Lapoon, and also the story of Jiroong's sister. The greater part of Jiroong's life and all the rest of the stories were got from the people themselves. It is worth remarking that, although these people are all less obviously maladjusted than Kurma, they had all except Jiroong had the unusual experience of living some years outside Zongu.

The first Dorjé Lapoon, Datoop and Jiroong were all lamas; Datoop was by far the most pious. Jiroong was a lama through his horoscope and not through birth, and appeared to attach rather more importance to the Mun ritual; in his house his sister always officiated. Mrs. Datoop was a very strong character, and overbore both her husband and her son Pembu. Jiroong was also dominated by his wife.

The accompanying genealogies should make the rather involved relationships clearer. (See page 417).

ii

The first Dorjé Lapoon.

X 159 588 The first Dorjé Lapoon, now aged eighty-two, has been his whole life long poor, lustful and shameless. As a young man he was married to his first wife, but after three years he left her because he wished to marry another woman, one Lungdeumu, his classificatory aunt.[1] He was told that he and she were too closely related for them to marry; but he was shameless and persisted in the marriage. Since the consanguinity was all through the female line no social action other than expressed disapproval was taken against this incestuous match.

X 159 Lungdeumu was the mother of his son Datoop, who was born in 1881. As soon as the child was born the Dorjé Lapoon took a dislike to his wife and went away to Darjeeling for a year to work there. On his return Lungdeumu's brother tried to induce him to return to his wife but he refused. Thereupon Lungdeumu's brother said 'You are no longer responsible for my sister; I shall give her in marriage again, and you will have no claim on the bride-price.'

[1] Her mother and his maternal grandmother were biological sisters.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [291]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

1:Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor 776
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which 152
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in the same house, and maternal relations generally live far away. If, however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal grandfather or married aunt children can always go and pay them short visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and who was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger children, used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, the Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he would go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his family, and at other times he would run away there of his own accord for a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, however, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except for these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhappy at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child in Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discussed earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distantly related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chano's second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasionally threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhappy but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turning into a bad boy, a *tané*.

858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhappy time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children are not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. But most of the children realise, though perhaps they would not enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity and occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary preliminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adult status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

replied that since the woman had herself come and implored /159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible.
A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to
give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to
be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies.
When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a
load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain.
These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he
said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more
than this he would not say. The same evening, when they 159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother 762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some
minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about
being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly
raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into
the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and
then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself
with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand
and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near.
His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand
and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him
to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried
to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his
tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly
clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He
shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some
wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [157]
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together
and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this
time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a
few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell /159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a
man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time,
but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since /159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
● 591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organization.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he 857 [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom*.

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi*. Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu*, or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku*, who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong*, which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len*, which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is [554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if 584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the 585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

23: Benedict ALl Southeast Asia
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, Lepcha AK5
618, 621

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

286 The weaving of cloth is, as has already been said, now almost extinct in Zongu; in Lingthem only a couple of women—the wives of Datoop and Jiroong—weave at all regularly. Lepcha cloths are extremely finely woven; nearly all are in striped patterns, sometimes over a plain, and sometimes over a patterned background. I have been shown such cloths further ornamented with needlework embroidery, but I did not see any so enhanced in Zongu. Although weaving is now almost a lost art, the spindle is considered the [562] typical feminine symbol, as the arrow is the masculine one; and in stories the heavy bar of the loom is the woman's chief weapon.

301 Although no attempt is made to add 'beauty' to the ordinary objects and surroundings of life, both men and women wear a certain amount of jewellery. The men wear turquoise ear-rings and rings, the women heavy and elaborate necklaces of big and usually unworked semi-precious stones, often with a charm-box of fretted gold or silver inlaid with turquoise and coral suspended from them, and also occasionally brooches and bracelets; but all these jewels are bought ready-made. [556] They are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a display of wealth and the only possible form of investment. Young people occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, but the effect is usually unfortu- [515] nately marred for the stranger owing to the Lepchas' habit of not washing their bodies.

iv

342 Nowadays new houses are built very rarely. According to Chala Mandal—the head of the village of Lingthem, and also of the smaller village of Panung to the east with ten houses, and Lik-lyang (five houses) Salim and Safo (three houses each) on the other side of the Talung river—only four new houses have been built in the present century. [592] Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers, either real or classificatory, do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own. Three of the four new houses—those of Ongden, Kurma and Nahyeun—were built for this reason. In the case of the fourth house—that of Katel—the situation was more complicated and irregular. 342 Katel, a man from a village on the far side of Zongu, 592 married a woman of Lingthem, an orphan who had been brought up in the Mandal's house, and took her home to his village. But

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 592 Mrs. Katel[7] was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[824]

[551] [7] Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Panung-mu (woman from Panung). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

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to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

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428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'housemother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
597 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

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be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the 428
younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property 428
permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there 597
is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple [592]
and one child, the dependent members of the household usually 422
have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

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597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have ●592 to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

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585 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their
777 own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat
592 subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

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husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these
visits are the means of producing further marriages between the
groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family
he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to
work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that
he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of
any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages
take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young,
and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage
and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually
had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These
preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accus-
tomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights
and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and
wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked prefer-
ence for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is
stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness
for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become
more important; now they are really part of the village and are
carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are
changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen.
The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them
are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the
child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may
be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional.
But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have
children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing
up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one
of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets
older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son,
even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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592 then the son is responsible for the taxes and the management of the household and his father and mother almost assume the rôles of honoured and leisured guests. At this period his sons in their turn will probably be getting married and he has to make the necessary economies for their marriage expenses; then his wife too will become a 'house mother' and will have the work taken off her by her younger sisters-in-law and daughters-in-law. Some younger brothers never achieve the position of house father; all their life until they are too old the position will be held by their elder brother and then when the elder brother wishes to retire it is probable that the younger brother will be about the same age and will prefer to hand over the work and responsibility to his nephew. If, however, there is considerable discrepancy in the ages of the two brothers the elder brother will hand over the management of the property to his younger brother, who will then in his turn re-transfer it to his elder brother's eldest son. Theoretically there are some advantages in being house father as the house father has control of the crops and their proceeds; but in point of fact there are more duties than advantages; the house father has to look ahead for future expenses and to make provision against them; he has to take what few decisions need to be taken; he has responsibilities but relatively very few rights, for if he started abusing his position, say taking all the money and grain for himself and his family and neglecting his dependants, either there would be a public scandal or the family would break up. The younger brothers would demand and get their share of all land and property so that the house father would be left alone with very diminished resources and would probably find considerable difficulty in getting the necessary help for the work in his fields and so on.

Such a gradual evolution and development is the ideal pattern of Lepcha life, but owing to the high incidence of sterility and a very uneven death-rate few people attain even a near approximation to it. As has already been explained[8] if the first wife is sterile it is permissible to take a second wife from the same family group as the first, but not every man has the money or inclination to do this, and there is no guarantee that the second wife will be fertile. It is said that in the majority of cases the first wife welcomes the arrival of a 'younger sister' as this will considerably lessen her work; it is not, however, unknown for co-wives to quarrel.

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's

[8] See Chapter Six, pp. 166–169.

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own. 592 [765]

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive. 592 888

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(δ) PLAN OF THE VILLAGE OF LINGTHEM

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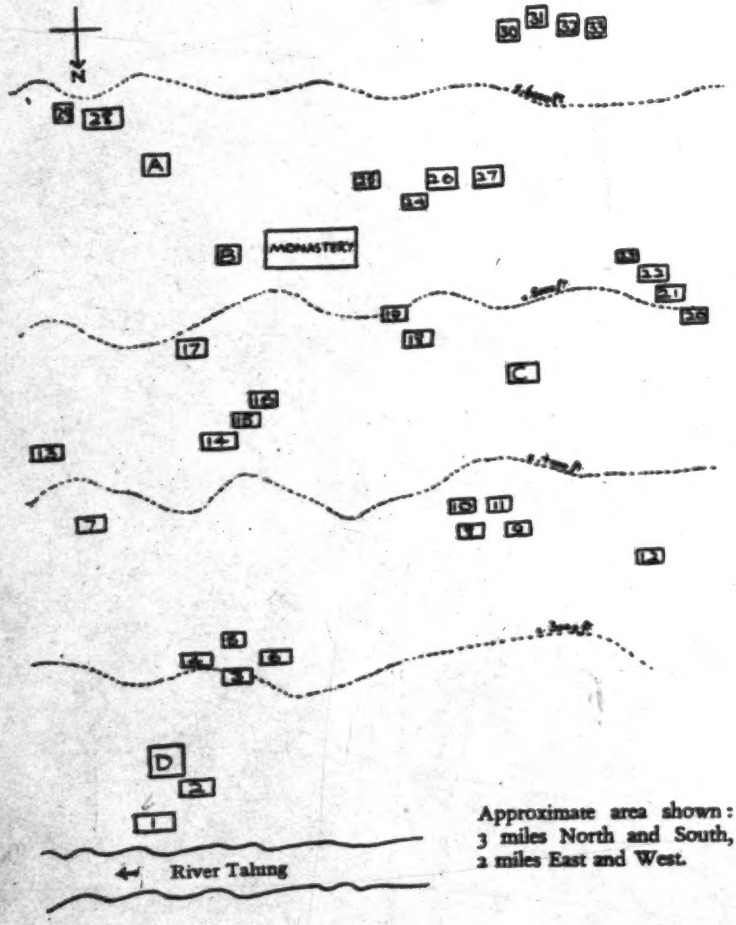
621

The accompanying plan shows schematically the distribution of houses in Lingthem. They are all situated on the northern slope of the mountain rising steeply from the River Talung. The numbers are for reference to the accompanying table of householders. B is the house of the monastery guardian. A, C and D are field-houses permanently inhabited by part of the household.



Approximate area shown: 3 miles North and South, 2 miles East and West.

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TABLE IV

LIST OF HOUSEHOLDERS

(arranged by PTSO (patrilineal clan) and showing composition of household)

House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
JAMYONG PTSO					
3	CHALA MANDAL	3	2	–	1
4	Chano	1	1	3	1
12	Asang	2	3	2	2
16	Chinya	2	1	–	–
18	Kahlyeu	1	1	1	–
23	Aga	1	3	1	2
27	Nariya	2	2	–	–
29	Ongden	3	2	2	3
30	Ashyok	3	2	–	–
31	Chelim	1	2	1	1
33	Tingkep	2	2	2	–
ZUMCHYONG PTSO					
9	Nahyeun	1	1	–	–
17	Tafoor	3	3	3	5
25	Kaji	2	2	–	–
28	Dunbi	1	1	–	1
32	Takneum	2	3	3	–
TAMSANG PTSO					
5	Thyak Thimbu	2	2	–	–
6	Gongyop	4	2	–	–
11	Zumba	2	2	–	–
PAKI PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
1	Kurma	2	1	–	1
22	Také	3	2	–	–
SAKMI PTSO					
10	Pembu	3	1	1	–
21	Datoop	2	1	1	–
A	First Dorjé Lapoon	2	–	–	–
ARAM PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
19	Tempa	1	2	–	2
20	Patek	2	4	1	–
B	Pongring	1	–	–	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

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House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
ARAM PANDJET PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
7	Takal	1	1	–	–
26	Lumba	2	2	–	–
C	Lumba's elder wife	–	1	1	–
DEMIK PTSO					
13	Katel	1	2	1	1
KALONG KANDONG PTSO					
2	Songpo	1	1	–	–
D	Nakleup (son of Songpo)	1	1	–	–
LUBDONG RABJI PTSO					
8	Pargeut	1	2	1	4
TAKPO PTSO					
14	Tobgé (has left house to live with Jiroong)				
24	Jiroong	2	2	1	2
TSELTELIM PTSO					
15	Serving	2	1	1	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

[p. 462 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law, and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

593 184 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing [302 606] the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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583 his or her uncle to make him like his partner. For if the two do not
584 sleep together the girl will not be able to 'lighten her mothers' shoulder' (that is, help her mother-in-law), and the boy will shame his parents and all the expense that the parents have been put to will be wasted. Moreover, should the couple separate, the girl's family will be blamed for not seeing that they made love.

584 This is another situation in which the Lepchas' formulation of ideal behaviour differs very considerably from their practice. Betrothal is very often a period of great emotional stress, especially for the girl who will energetically refuse to have anything to do with her proposed husband. In all the cases that came to my notice of betrothed couples getting on badly together the pair had never achieved copulation and the older Lepchas in referring to these situations always stated that the difficulties would be got over if the pair slept together—a statement which seems to be borne out by experience. But just because the girls also hold this belief they repulse their husbands with even greater energy; I am almost certain that this repulsion is actuated not by physical or emotional distaste for the husband but by a deep-seated fear of leaving their family and their surroundings. In such situations the Lepcha theory calls for physical punishment of the recalcitrant party, but Lepcha practice makes such behaviour very unpleasant. The result is a good deal of threatenings and grumblings and no actions at all. In such situations those adults not directly responsible for the behaviour of the children are full of loud talk as to the energetic steps which should be taken; the responsible adults are full of excuses for putting off the crisis until another occasion.

In Lingthem in 1937 there were five boys or young men who were *asék*'d and three who had only had their wives home a few weeks or months. Of these, three had had very stormy betrothals in which the hostility had lasted for several years. In one case, that of Nariya, who was thirty years old (he had been married earlier but the marriage had broken down because of the girl's promiscuity followed by her running away with all the available valuables and cash), this hostility continued even after the performance of the marriage feast and a peaceful settlement only approached during the last days of my stay there. Nariya's wife was fourteen, a large overgrown girl. After three years' betrothal the marriage feast was
● 593 celebrated in the late autumn of 1936. Immediately after the
585 marriage the girl returned home and refused to have anything to do with her husband, saying: 'I do not want to see your face,' and

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593 585 exclaiming: 'May that man die!' Whenever Nariya went to visit her she used to throw stones at him to drive him away. It was said that she was carrying on a love affair with a Nepali in her distant village. On one occasion the girl's parents came to Lingthem, but Nariya was too shy to say anything. At the end of April Tempa said that he threatened the parents that if they did not send the girl he would apply to the police station. He explained that he spoke after consultation with the Mandal because Nariya's uncle Ashyok had not enough sense.

On May 11th, 1937, Nariya went to fetch his wife home; on May 17th she returned with him but bringing with her a younger brother aged twelve to sleep with her as a chaperone. On May 18th she went away again to Mangan to see her father, but she returned still accompanied by the younger brother on May 20th. On this day took place one of the bi-monthly monastery feasts and Nariya's wife took this opportunity to become formally introduced into the village community. Although she still did not sleep with her husband she seemed to be settling down and was helping in the preparations for the big annual feast of Boom koor which was to take place three days later, helping with the cooking and so on. She did not talk much but sat about quite comfortably in the groups where people made rather a fuss of her. All the time she kept some small child by her, either her own younger brother or Pankek, a little girl of six. She seemed to find comfort in the presence of young children. Tobgé was familiar with her, hugging her and feeling her breasts, but she showed no resentment. She had on a clean new green blouse but a filthy dirty skirt. The general belief was that in a day or so Nariya would succeed in sleeping with her and that then the marriage would settle down completely and happily.

Nariya it is true was not a very attractive character. He had an extraordinarily high-pitched almost eunochoid voice and a slightly sly expression. He was an orphan; his father, when he lived, was the richest man in Lingthem and a great deal of the wealth in cattle had been expended on the funeral feasts for him and many other relations of his generation who had died very close to one another. Nariya wished to regain his father's wealth and was therefore, most exceptionally for a Lepcha, engaged in strenuous [556] economies, spending as little as he could, except when he had to give feasts, on clothes or food; he was rather secretive.

Of the other recently married men Rigya, Nariya's cousin and

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593 adopted brother, and Kutt'r were now getting on all right with their
586 wives after a preliminary period of conflict in each case lasting about four years. Kutt'r who was eighteen years old was married at the age of fourteen to a wife one month after *asék*, before which he had never met her. She had only come to live with him in the last few months. First of all they disliked one another thoroughly; then by the pressure of their families they were brought to sleep together but did not do anything. Only in the last two or three months have they copulated together; now they like one another.

585 Gongyop's son was born in 1919; he is a very girlish-looking and under-developed boy and preternaturally shy; it will be remembered that he was drinking his mother's milk up to the age of ten. Before *asék* he did not know his wife; *asék* took place about six months ago. The girl is older and bigger than he and at first he was frightened of her, though she spoke nicely to him. On May 19th he returned from his third visit to her at which they had slept together. He came home with a look on his face like a cat which had just been fed on cream and seemed rather proud of himself; he said that now he likes his wife. Datoop's younger son was *asék* by proxy for his elder brother Pichi; but Pichi at the beginning of May definitely refused the marriage and instead the youngest son was going to marry the girl. On May 9th he went off with his father to pay a visit to his bride. I asked the boy what present he was taking to his parents-in-law, at which his father replied 'His present is between his legs'. He was, however, also taking a leg of meat with him. Datoop hoped that, if the harvest was good, the girl would be brought home in the autumn.

On March 19th Mikmar, Chano's eldest son, aged thirteen, was *asék*'d to an unknown girl three or four years older than himself. By May 9th he had paid the girl three visits. They are patently unable to sleep together for Mikmar is still very childish, but they get on well enough together and give each other food.

584 In Lingthem there were only four unmarried girls over the age of twelve; of these Prumtu, the girl with the squint, is likely to wait some time before marrying and Tafoor's eldest daughter has only just passed twelve and has not yet been asked for. The other two girls are the two eldest daughters of Pargetu, aged sixteen and twelve respectively; they have been *asék*'d to two brothers. The
593 younger girl, Tangvoong, gets on well enough with her young husband, but the older one, Kondé, does not; the two both fight

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like cat and dog. This girl had a very unpleasant eruption of boils all over her face and I saw a great deal of her because she used to come up every third day to have her boils dressed; they were cured before I left. According to Tafoor, who is a very distant sort of uncle, the girl got her boils from a devil which was brought by her husband with the *asék* presents. She does not like her husband, and has so far refused to sleep with him (or, Tafoor thinks, anybody else). Tafoor considers that the fault really lies with the husband, who should have forced her to sleep with him when she came to his house; he did not, probably because he was ashamed. If she persists in not liking him she will be spoken to and given a beating to make her; it is simply naughtiness on her part.

During my stay in Lingthem Kondé was taken to visit her prospective husband once and the husband came also twice to her house to help her parents work. The situation did not develop in any way. Kondé had got set into an attitude of rebellious mutism in which she refused to do anything or to speak to anybody unless it was absolutely necessary. The only person who seemed to have any influence with her was Mrs. Datoop, who was a distant 'aunt by marriage'. Her attitude was completely mulish; so to speak, she dug in her feet and put back her ears and refused to budge. She showed no preference for anybody other than her betrothed; her attitude was entirely negative, she did not want to marry and especially not to marry the man provided for her. When she addressed him she used to use the childish abusive phrases, which have normally been abandoned and forgotten by people of her age. Kondé was a good and industrious girl and a considerable help to her parents, but she did not and would not get married. It was, I think, much more the fear of separation from her parents and home, even though she would be accompanied by a younger sister, which motivated her refusal, rather than actual dislike of her husband, who chiefly personified exile.

These examples will show that in about half the cases of betrothal there is considerable hostility on the part of the girl. For the girl marriage means nearly always geographical separation from her family—almost a second weaning—and many of them do not face this prospect cheerfully. This psychological disturbance cannot by any means be equated with puberty for betrothal may take place at any age from eight upwards. It is an intellectual and not a physical disturbance. It seems to me very probable that it is the successful overcoming of this second weaning which gives to young

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups. 574

The husband practically does not change status at all through marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless. 593 [844] [586]

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name; 592 851 [553] 592

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159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopön was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding [593] life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

[837] After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's [762] elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re- [682] sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

● 593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analysis]

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu 184
families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the 593
Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom [177]
of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the 185
conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think 000
that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

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587 If, after a number of years of marriage, a man's wife is sterile, he has a right to apply to his wife's family for a second wife, provid-
● 595 ing his first wife agrees. The formalities entailed in this request are the same as those which have to be performed after the death of a first wife;[22] an extra preliminary present has to be given, but the subsequent expenses for the marriage are slightly less. In theory it is only permissible to take a second wife from the first wife's *ptso*, and ideally this second wife should be the first wife's real or classificatory younger sister. This is recognised in the terms with
[601] which co-wives are always referred to; the Nepali words *jethi* and *kanchi*, meaning 'eldest sister' and 'youngest sister' are always used; Lepcha has no equivalent terms to indicate the position of a child in the order of birth. In the great majority of cases the ideal conditions are observed, and the two wives, if not actual sisters, are of the same *ptso* and use kinship terms. In cultural theory the co-wives have already an established habit of cooperation and cohabitation which only needs to be renewed, and the situation of co-wife is meant to be an agreeable one. This expectation is not always justified; occasionally co-wives quarrel; but the majority are glad for the companionship of a close relative, and the lessened work which their presence means. The husband is meant to spend alternate nights with each of them.

595 In Lingthem there are seven men with two wives each; but only in three cases was the second wife taken because the first wife was sterile. In two of the cases the second wife is indeed only a co-wife by courtesy; Asang gave a home to the middle-aged widow of his elder brother, because she had nowhere else to go; and for the same reason Gongyop took in his wife's sister. In this second case the hospitality was not long accepted; though nearly sixty years old, this woman, Samblyou, with her elder sister Mrs. Takal, is the most promiscuous woman in the village, and after distributing her favours in nearly every direction, including the seduction of a number of the younger boys, she is now cohabiting with Zumba, a widower twelve years younger than herself.

Chala Mandal has had in all four wives in two pairs; the first wife he gave to a 'younger brother', who lived with him; after her death he also gave him her equally sterile sister; this second wife returned to her family after the death of the

[22] See p. 159.

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'younger brother'. Chala Mandal then married two more wives, 595
'sisters', and nieces of the first two wives; the last wife of all was the widow of Katel's dead son to whom she had already borne two daughters who stayed with their grandfather; after her marriage to the Mandal she bore two more daughters, one of whom still survives.

Thyak Thimbu has also had four wives in two pairs. The first two died childless; the second two, though not related to the first wives, are themselves aunt and niece. Almost after hope of Thyak Thimbu—he is Gongyop's elder brother—producing a child had been abandoned his youngest wife bore a son in May 1937. Lumba *chithembu* has also had two wives, 'grandmother' and 'granddaughter'; the second wife has borne him three children. Lumba *jethi* is a rather independent old body; though she gets on well enough with her co-wife she dislikes what she calls 'living in a crowd' and consequently has made a permanent home for herself in a field-house, which she shares with her younger stepson; it is a rule that, if for any reason co-wives separate, the children shall be equally divided. The two wives cooperate in all the field-work. Lumba is meant to divide his time equally between the two of them, but well-authenticated rumour says that he spends much more time with *jethi*; she is a jolly and extremely bawdy old party. She is a Mun and is nearly always the singer on those occasions when singing is ceremonially called for.

By his first wife Katel had one son and three daughters; but the daughters married away, and the son, a thief and a ne'er-do-well, died a violent death in foreign parts. Therefore ostensibly in the hope of begetting another son Katel married a second wife, of a different *ptso* to his first one (who is still living) a woman twenty-seven years younger than himself; she is only eighteen now. Very exceptionally for a Lepcha, he is deeply in love with this young wife of his; she on the other hand cannot stick Katel, and the marriage is extremely stormy, with threats of and occasional attempts at suicide on both sides. For a number of years this young wife refused to go to live with Katel; finally two years ago the Mandal threatened her parents that if they permitted their daughter to live with or return to them, they must refund the marriage price. So for two years she has been living with Katel, but she still refuses to sleep with him, despite the jewels and presents with which he has smothered her; it is rumoured that she finds pleasanter bed-fellows elsewhere. Katel though rich and fairly

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595 industrious, is so stupid as to be almost defective, and has a very unpleasant look of low cunning. He is one of the most unpopular people in the village: I personally found him quite repulsive.

Finally there is the case of Aga, the son of Hlatam the 'poisoner', which represents one of the most disruptive situations possible in Lepcha life. Aga has been married a number of years; his wife has borne him three children, and was in the spring of 1937 pregnant with a fourth. During the greater part of his married life Aga slept, quite legitimately, with the sterile wife of one of his paternal uncles. When this uncle died in 1935 the aunt returned home to her blood-relations in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum, as there was no suitable man in her husband's family to inherit her. At the end of the year of mourning she was *aṡék*'d by Zumba of Lingthem; but six months after this *aṡék* she came and settled permanently in Aga's house, with whom she had continued her intercourse uninterruptedly. Aga's first wife was naturally very angry and reproachful, as there is no possible excuse for bringing home a second wife when the first wife is fertile; and, as marriage is the concern of the whole group, all her family are angry with Aga and his aunt. This aunt has been argued with for days on end; people have pointed out to her how desirable Zumba, with his fine house and many fields, is as a husband; but she remains obdurate and refuses to go and live with him. The situation is naturally extremely unpleasant and disturbing, and is under constant discussion by the Mandals of Lingthem and Lungdeum. There is a constant fear that the first wife's family will come and demand elaborate reparation from Aga, or alternatively that she may return home with her children to them. This behaviour is loudly condemned by the other Lepchas; it is chiefly for this that Aga is called 'evil-minded'.

Some years ago there was another similar but more pathetic situation. After the Muktair was married and his wife, Tafoor-mu, had borne him two children, he went to Gangtok for five years to study in one of the big monasteries. During this long absence he fell in love with another girl, and on his return he asked Tafoor-mu to let him bring a second wife home. She at first naturally objected; she had borne him two sons; what was the justification for bringing home a second wife? But the Muktair promised that he would love both wives equally, and she finally allowed herself to be persuaded; the Muktair then *aṡék*'d the girl from Gangtok and brought her home two years later: their only child, a daughter, was born in this interval. When she came home this second wife

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proved to be jealous and possessive, and refused to allow her husband to sleep with Tafoor-mu. 595

Dunbi was the 'younger brother' (actually the son of a younger paternal uncle) of the Muktair; at the period when the second wife was brought home he was completely alone, for his parents, wife, and children had all died in a dysentery epidemic. The Muktair took him into his house, and there he so well consoled Tafoor-mu that she became pregnant. The Muktair thereupon offered her to Dunbi; he *asék*'d her with the symbolical gift of one pig, and the families separated. One year later the second wife died.

The position of Tafoor-mu is one of the saddest in Lingthem; formerly the wife of the most prosperous man in the neighbourhood, and with two prosperous sons, she is now married to the poorest and most feckless man in the village. She has borne him three daughters; the eldest is married away, the second lives with her half-brother, Tafoor—she is unbetrothed Prumtu, the girl with the squint—and the youngest is a child of six. Although Tafoor and Chudo give her occasional presents she lives and dresses poorly, and has to work hard to compensate for her husband's sloth. As far as I could observe, Tafoor and Chudo feel little love or respect for their unfortunate mother.

We in Europe make passionate and personal love one of the chief pivots round which our society moves; the Lepchas of Zongu have completely excluded it, and it is liable to be extremely disruptive when it does flare up. The normal emotional situation is one of reasonable affection founded on mutual rights and benefits; people love one another for statable and stated reasons. No love is considered automatic; it is not considered inevitable that parents should love their children nor brothers their brothers and sisters; it is merely considered probable, because their situations entail the mutual obligations on which love is supposed to rest. Unless people are strongly deviant Lepchas are chary of pronouncing judgement on their neighbours' characters; most people, they say, are much of a muchness. Consequently it is to be expected that arranged marriages will turn out well, unless one of the partners has a really bad character; since love is founded on mutual obligations and benefits, these mutual obligations can be set up between any two people. It is worth noting that all three men whose love stories are recounted above fall well outside the Lepcha norm. The Muktair was, it would appear, an exceptionally strong-willed and ambitious man, and his love affair started when he was living 152 581

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tration of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had 152
twice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accom- 831
panied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he enjoyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her.

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with 575
his field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because he has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbourhood, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him and to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted without any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free in the choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make the request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly as if he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events. The co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights, [843]
but all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, and he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception is only made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence makes his paternity a physiological impossibility.

In the recent past there have only been two cases of such polyandry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above, who first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger brother'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who shared his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a lama attached to another village who was almost always away, so that the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his shared wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a wife, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless the two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as it is liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advantages for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an easy way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an extra adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife when you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband on the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor and unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that there are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of [835]
polyandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with your husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are obviously suspended.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of
fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery.
As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and
sometimes with his mother, who had now married the head-
man of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an
attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was
her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to
live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to
Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies
at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of
the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at
least regularise his position. To this he consented; and
accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a
pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day
espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a
mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the cere-
mony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give
birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some
time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In
those days, before the present building had been erected, the
main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There
was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a
separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living
in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a
woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had
already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but
her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor
to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit.
Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok,
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head.

[582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction.

[595] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in

[587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill.

[861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so preoccupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 -AK5 Lepcha AK5

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [684]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848 closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595 case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848 able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842] even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553] secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753] of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 11

Marriage and General Relations between the Sexes

● 595 CONTRARY to the reports of earlier travellers, the Lepchas (at least in Jongu) do not practise polyandry, except in very rare circumstances. It is true that their customs permit it; but in actual practice two brothers only share a wife when one is continuously away from home. The only known cases have already been noted in the chapter of personal histories. When polyandry does occur it is always, as in Tibet, what is technically known as adelphic polyandry, that is to say the co-husbands are always brothers; and in discussing the subject the idea that a woman could be married to two men who were not themselves brothers (in the full biological sense) appeared never to have entered the people's heads. Whether it would be possible for a woman to marry more than two brothers at a time I do not know, since a case of this sort has not occurred in Jongu. I imagine that [177] polyandry, such as it is in Jongu, has arisen entirely as a result of contact with Tibetans. It appears to be unknown among Lepchas of other districts, and in discussing the subject the Mandal was definitely ashamed to own that it sometimes occurred. "It is not a good thing," he said; "but it is common among Tibetans, and is sometimes a convenience when one brother is more or less permanently away from home. For this reason I have occasionally recommended, as in the case of Pichi and his brother, that a girl should be married to two brothers."

595 A distinction must, however, be drawn between marriage 837 and sexual relations: for while it is unusual for a Lepcha girl to be actually married to more than one man, it is common for her occasionally to sleep with all his younger brothers. The important point to note, however, is that she is not married

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

595 to them, whereas in a true polyandrous society each of the
837 men concerned is a legal husband, and takes his place as such at the wedding ceremonies.

835 It will perhaps make the situation clearer if I explain the sexual rights of a Lepcha in tabular form.

A man may sleep with:

1. The wives of all his elder brothers, and their younger sisters, whether married or not.

2. The wives of his father's younger brothers, and their younger sisters.

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that the youngest of seven brothers, for instance, whose father was himself the eldest of seven more brothers would have the legal right to sleep with no less than twelve women; but this is assuming that none of the women concerned had any younger sisters. This is, of course, a purely theoretical example and in actual practice many of the women would not normally be available since their husbands would probably be living in different villages: but even so, it means that many a man has "a home from home," so to speak, in several of the surrounding villages. In the two categories mentioned above the woman concerned cannot refuse the man's advances. He has a legal right to copulate with her, and may, if necessary, force her to submit against her will. But in addition to all these women
837 with whom a man may legally sleep, there is no moral
835 objection to his doing so with any women with whom he can trace a like classificatory relationship. But in this case the matter is entirely dependent upon the woman's willingness to co-operate: she cannot be forced to submit. In actual practice the result of all this is that in a small village there are very few women with whom a man may not amuse himself. This was certainly the case in Lingtem; but there were one or two unfortunate only sons who had, legally at all events, to confine themselves to their own wives. A great many men, however, do also have affairs with other women, of which little notice is taken, even by the husbands concerned: but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 wife. It appears that in such cases the first wife's feelings
●595 are not in any way considered, and the *Thim seut* is given, not to appease her but to prevent her becoming ill, which might otherwise be the case.

586 If a man wishes to divorce his wife he must pay eight-eighty rupees in cash to her father and give her one-half of all his movable property. This is known as *Gay-top*. Children also are divided between the two parents by mutual arrangement. Should there be an only daughter her eventual marriage price will be divided between the parents; and in the case of an only son it is usual for him to remain with his father, who pays the mother an additional forty rupees, one cow, one pig and a length of cloth for this privilege. A daughter may live with either parent; but whatever the decision, the question of payment does not in her case arise. In exceptional circumstances it may be arranged that a son shall remain with his mother, and in this case she gives the above presents to her husband, substituting an ox for the cow and a copper pot for the length of cloth.

There are no cases of divorce in Lingtem within living memory, nor does it often happen elsewhere; but in view of the constitution of Lepcha society there would appear to be little need of divorce, since it fulfils no useful function.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

181 his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and
439 use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the
411 latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy,
578 straight knife,* but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

181 The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and
●595 Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

291 Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added.

411 A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by
291 the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo† bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the

* It is called "Ban," and serves equally for plough, toothpick, table-knife, hatchet, hammer, and sword.

[439] † The bamboo, of which the quiver is made, is thin and light: it is brought from Assam, and called Tulda, or Dulwa, by the Bengalees.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

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With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must
597 acquire, either by marriage or adoption, ~~a male~~ who can inherit the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children
428 of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organisation.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

428 of sons the biggest fields will be split in two. Should two or more
596 brothers wish to continue to live together they will be given
428 adjoining fields. In recent years there has only been one such division; Ongden and his two brothers separated during their father's life-time.

592 An example of the working of the joint family can be given
596 from Tafoor's household. This, the biggest in the village, consists of fifteen people: the second Dorjé Lapoon, the elder brother of the Muktair, Tafoor's dead father, and his newly-married wife Pumri who was formerly his aunt: Tafoor, his wife and four children; Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, with his wife and three children; Prumtu, a fifteen-year-old half-sister of Tafoor; and a distantly related celibate lama. The whole household work together on the temporary fields, of which only one of each sort is cleared each year. Beyond a few animals, the second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife own no property; it would not be seemly for him to do so as a revered Dorjé Lapoon. Tafoor and Chudo have separate rice and cardamum fields and animals; but the produce, though kept separate, is taken in approximately equal quantities
[426] for household consumption. They share in the payment of the taxes and the liquidation of the debt left by their dead father; the rest of the cardamum money each spends as he thinks fit. Though there is only six years difference in their age they act and appear as if they were of different generations; Tafoor is notably serious and responsible, Chudo rather childish and always joking. The second Dorjé Lapoon and his wife are treated as honoured guests and have no responsibilities; Mrs. Tafoor fills the rôle of 'house-mother', saving the sowing seed and giving out the stores to be cooked, Mrs. Chudo that of 'youngest daughter-in-law', doing the cooking and making herself useful.

423 Land can only be owned by men; in the event of a woman or
428 group of women being left sole possessors of a property they must acquire, either by marriage or adoption, a male who can inherit
● 597 the property. Some childless couples adopt a son (*kup-tsop*—literally a substitute child) to look after them in their old age and to be their heir. In nearly all cases such adopted sons are the children of near relations.[10] Should a person die without heirs or should
428 the heirs be too young to work the property a *ké-tsop* (a word formed on the analogy of *kup-tsop*, a substitute tax-payer) will

[10] Further details about adoption will be found in Chapter VI, p. 177.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

be appointed by the Mandal; for the purpose he will choose the 428
younger son of a large family. If there are no direct heirs the *ké-tsop* will keep the property permanently; if the heirs are infants he will hand over the property when the boy is big enough to work the land himself. In such a case during his guardianship the *ké-tsop* will be responsible for the payment of the taxes; he works the land and supports the ward, but can keep for himself any profit he can make. He receives no other fee for his services. To give an example, Ongden's eldest son was acting as *ké-tsop* to Kahlyeu; Kahlyeu, who is getting on to eighty, is too old to work the land, and his only surviving grandson Chélé is too young. I asked if there was any possibility in such a case of a *ké-tsop* trying to claim the land permanently and was told that such behaviour was absolutely unthinkable. Indeed the idea was so grotesque that it was treated as a good joke.

In the case of a childless couple the *ké-tsop* keeps the property 428
permanently. When a rich and childless couple grow old there
is occasionally a certain amount of intrigue by parents to get 597
their child adopted by them; but this is always done indirectly and through intermediaries; it would be shameless for parents to offer their own children for adoption. A year ago an old couple died in Lingthem whose only children were two daughters who were married in other villages; during their lifetime the old people did not want to adopt a boy and struggled alone to pay their taxes and work their fields; after they died the Mandal and *youmi* decided that Pichi, the second son of Datoop, should be made *ké-tsop*. The married daughters took all the movable property and animals between them; Pichi only got the house and land, and his father had to pay for the funeral expenses of the old couple. This property now belongs to Pichi and his descendants for perpetuity; he and his younger brother and his parents have moved into this house, leaving the old house and property to Datoop's eldest married son Pembu. The houses and fields are at some distance from one another.

If the household consists of more than a single married couple [592]
and one child, the dependent members of the household usually 422
have a little private property of their own, in the form of a few animals and small portions of rice terraces and cardamum fields. When children achieve physical independence they are given their own clothes and knife or sickle and usually a wooden cup; and usually at about the same time a baby chicken or kid or piglet.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

583 There is one other potential arrangement by which men without
● 597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

born in the neighbouring village of Panung; the wife to whose house he went is now dead, though her mother is still living there; Kurma is *asék*'d to another woman whom he hopes to bring home in 1938. Besides these two men there are two other men living in Lingthem who were not born there; these are Katel, whose story has already been told, and Takneum *youmi*, who was adopted as a boy by his father's married sister. 583 597

V

It sometimes happens that after *asék* has been performed the boy and girl feel a really strong repulsion for one another. In many cases a girl will simulate repulsion and will refuse to let her groom sleep with her; but this is thought to be chiefly due to shame and to dislike of having to leave her parents' home; and therefore the young people are cajoled and bribed and threatened and even sometimes beaten to make them like one another. If however the repulsion felt is really strong and there seems no possibility of breaking it down, two solutions are open; either the whole arrangement is called off and the gifts or their equivalents in money returned, or else an alternative spouse, usually a younger brother of the groom and occasionally a younger sister of the bride, is offered instead. The best example of these arrangements can be shown in the history of Rigya. Rigya, who is twenty-two years old, was *asék*'d when he was about fifteen to one girl, but they did not get on at all well together and after a time the Mandal arranged for the marriage payments to be given back. His eldest brother, Aplung, was also *asék*'d to a girl he disliked; he therefore gave her to his youngest brother, Gyatso, who did not want her and ran away to Gangtok to work as a carpenter; thereupon the girl was given to Rigya, who was the middle brother. This is a somewhat irregular arrangement because Gyatso was younger than Rigya; but since Aplung was older she was looked on as being originally the wife of the elder brother and therefore marriageable. Aplung subsequently married a widow, a woman considerably older than himself. 582 584

Most consummated marriages are stable and divorce or separation is very rare. The chief cause of divorce is usually for incompatibility of character or refusal to work properly on the part of the wife. If a man sends his wife away he has to pay a fine of Rs. 88 to the girl's father and has to divide with the wife all the movable 586

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children 163
have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other 165
than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of 161
Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children [777]
chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size [773]
of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen 597
married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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●597 presents are called '.the price of milk'. For the child of a stranger besides these presents must be given a big pig, a load of *chi* and two big baskets of rice and pop-corn; the giving of these presents is equated with the giving of betrothal presents and both are called by the same word, *asék*: in the adopting *asék* however no *bek-bu* is required; the adopting father takes the presents himself and brings the child away with him. In the case of a destitute orphan no ceremonial presents are given; the child is merely fed and housed in exchange for his labour; if there are no other direct heirs and if the child does not quarrel with his adopting parents he will normally inherit the property. Formally adopted children are treated in every way as the real heirs of their parents. It is permissible to adopt a child at any age between weaning and marriage; the most usual age is between three and seven.

Two reasons are given for adopting a child: to have the benefit of the child's labour, and to have an heir and a support in old age. The first reason is much stressed; almost as soon as children acquire physical independence they do a number of chores about the house, which increase with their age and strength; for example, fetching wood and water and helping their elders by fetching tools and preparing simple implements for work. On the whole people only adopt children after many years of marriage.

The health of the child is the only consideration when adoption is considered; up till marriage good or bad looks are not regarded. The child will be allowed to return to its real parents from time to time; if the adopting parents and the adopted child get on really badly the child may be returned with a present of a big copper pot; but if the child runs away because it is unhappy it will be sent back by its parents. There is no supposed emotional relationship between the adopting parents and adopted child; if they are treated well the children will love them; if not, not. For example, Atyook says that he loves his adopting parents better than his real ones; Kurma detested his and though he has now left them for twenty years he still bears a grudge against them. For the adults concerned adoption is generally a matter of convenience; a man with a large family (a son will only be given away if there are at least two others at home) places a son without expense to himself and assures his future; the adopters get a general servant and a support in their old age. Adopting parents naturally pay all the marriage expenses of their adopted son.

Very occasionally a girl is adopted; there was one case of this

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in the village. Chelim, who was himself adopted and who has in turn adopted a young boy, has also adopted the daughter of his younger brother (this brother who lives in another village has six daughters and no sons). This is done to get the services of a child; the adopting parents also get the marriage payments.

It is generally considered that the parents of large families do well by their children in giving them to childless relations to bring up as their heirs; it is considered though rather deplorable to give one's child to complete strangers or to people quite unrelated. For the adopted children however the situation appears to be unpleasant and emotionally complicated; children are seldom given away before the age of about four, by which time the patterns of affection within the biological family have been firmly established; consequently there is a considerable emotional struggle, and in nearly all the histories of adopted children that I obtained there are frequent stories of running home to the real parents, and of being beaten and sent back. An adopted child is lonely; adults do not normally talk to or play with children once they have achieved physical independence; and the isolation of Lepcha houses renders contact with neighbouring children, if there are any, slight and intermittent. It seems also (though with so few cases it is difficult to generalise) that the adopting parents have a tendency to make the child work harder than the real parents would do. Adopting parents are generally considerably older than the biological parents—adoption before the age of forty is uncommon—and more set in their ways; and the child has no companions to share his labours with him and lessen them with play. Adopted children appeared rather silent and awkward; they were more sullen than those children who lived with a group of siblings, and, unlike only children, neither demanded nor received attention from adults. After weaning normal Lepcha children habitually depend more on their elder siblings than on their parents; there seems to me to be a tendency to identify with elder siblings rather than with parents (owing to the extension of family terms and groupings a couple's first child is still likely to have 'elder siblings') and to participate, through this identification, in their emotional and sexual life. This phase of development is lost for adopted children; also they usually have not witnessed childbirth—children are normally always present at subsequent births in the household—and they appear to develop a complex of emotions around facts which are very simply accepted by the vast majority of children. Of the six adults who were

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597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

.885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed
592 death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

● 597 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be
853 little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and
[166] child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are
[783] scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

124 to monologue, to recount anecdotes, to illustrate a theme by their own past experiences. I soon noticed that Kurma had a particular tendency to do this, and also that he was flattered by my obvious interest in what he had to say. After we had been in fairly continuous contact for about a month I asked him to tell me what he remembered of his childhood. He did so willingly, and thereafter it was easy to bring him back to the subject of his own past life by asking a single leading question. 'What happened after you did so-and-so?' 'What happened to so-and-so?' While he was telling his story I asked practically no questions at all; I kept all queries for subsequent meetings when impersonal subjects would be discussed, when I would interject them without apparent emphasis. Altogether about six full days were passed mainly in the discussion of Kurma's own life; I should undoubtedly have had more material if he had not first been summoned to visit his parents-in-law and on his return been taken ill with fever. Besides these special sessions Kurma would often introduce apposite anecdotes of his own past life, both before and after I had started getting his story.

With Kurma, more than with any other individual in Lingthem we managed to set up a pattern of mutual obligations. As *gyapön* he had been charged by the Mandal to look after us, especially in the matter of getting provisions; he enjoyed the reflected importance of his contact with Europeans, and I flattered him by appealing to him somewhat more often than was necessary. He was anyhow more disposed to talk than to work and was very amenable to cajolery.

I did not like Kurma very much and had not very full confidence in him. I repeatedly tried to trip him up by asking him identical questions at considerable intervals of time, and to check up on him by questioning other people. Actually my distrust was practically unfounded; only on one major point—the death of Banyok—did I find him completely incorrect, and at a later date he voluntarily retracted his first version.

Both through temperament and circumstances Kurma was an [157] a-typical Lepcha. In temperament he had an unusual desire for power, was boastful, and had decided sadistic traits. Sociotically he was unfortunately circumstanced and his treatment of his circumstances was unusual. His mother appears to have been exceptionally 124 poor and his adopting parents exceptionally unkind. Adoption is 517 of itself statistically rare—only eleven people out of the 176 in

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lingthem were or had been adopted; and Kurma is unique in having completely abandoned his adopting parents to return to his biological parents. Again as a person with two elder brothers Kurma is unusual in having become head of the household at an early age and in having had the heavy economic burden of seven funerals in a fairly short stretch of time.[4] He is also unusual in having started with an irregular sexual union, and extremely unfortunate in the mortality of his wives. 124 [597]

Nevertheless, despite his unusual character and circumstances, I believe that Kurma's life-story, incomplete though it is, gives a good illustration of the dynamic workings of Lepcha culture and an adequate cross-section view of Lepcha society. By developing the themes which he touches on,[5] sometimes very cursorily, one would have an almost complete picture of Lepcha social arrangements; if it were not for the awkwardness of such an arrangement, all the preceding chapters of this book could be used as amplification for Kurma's story.

I am giving the notes in the form in which I took them. The portions in quotation marks are nearly *verbatim* transcriptions; I could not, however, always write quickly enough to take down every word, and I have omitted the repetitions which swell out all Lepcha stories. The portions told in the third person are chiefly incidents which cropped up in the discussion of other matters. 128

Although I have not altered the notes in any way I am presenting them in more or less historical order, which is not that in which the information was given to me. To simplify reading I am giving cross-headings, and a few explanatory notes. For those points in his narrative on which I questioned other people and on which their versions differed considerably from Kurma's I have presented the alternative versions in brackets and italics. For ease of reference I am also giving overleaf a calendar of the more or less well-established dates in Kurma's life and the names and dates of birth and death of his immediate family. To bring his story up to date I have put after his narrative a journal of his doings during the period when I was observing him.

[4] The only people in Lingthem similarly circumstanced were Nariya and Rigya, and they were economically far better able to stand the strain.

[5] I have omitted in the following pages all the impersonal material (ceremonies, etc.) which Kurma incorporated in his story.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against
the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
● [597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later
on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free
will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take
you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of
rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give
them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can
then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the
idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than
he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but
when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice;
and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this
new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to
go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that
if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which
would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that
his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting
mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him;
then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child
[428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does
831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no
[521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should
[212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental
535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen
584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SIX

THE RULES OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

i

When a Lepcha speaks of 'we' he generally means all the people of his village. But besides these geographical divisions Lepchas are divided up into other groups by birth and marriage; these groups are the patrilineal clan, or *ptso*, and the immediate and extended family. Unlike their neighbours, the Nepali, the Lepchas have a very small number of kinship terms;[1] fewer even than we have, for they exclude all the category of cousins, and, except for the mother's brothers, make no distinction between the paternal and maternal lines. For people younger than the speaker, too, they do not make any distinction of sex; the same word is used for a younger brother or a younger sister, for a son or a daughter, for a nephew or a niece. Only in the case of children's spouses are different words used for son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Old age is considered by the Lepchas to be a desirable quality; the polite term of address to anybody you are not related to is 'old man'; and there is a tendency to push anybody older than the speaker into a higher generation. Thus, when a man has had a child he calls his wife's parents 'grandfather' and 'grandmother', and the parents call their own elder brothers and sisters 'father' and 'mother'; the wife's elder brother, or her elder sister's husband (and conversely) are equated with her father. The opposite tendency is also manifested towards the wives of younger brothers (the elder brother calls them 'daughters-in-law') and the husbands of younger sisters (the elder sister calls them 'sons-in-law'). In the joint family which dwells under a single roof only nine terms are normally used: 'grandfather', 'grandmother,' 'father',

[1] A complete list of Lepcha kinship terms and other common forms of address are given in Appendix II.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●601 'mother', 'elder brother', 'elder sister', 'younger brother-or-sister,' 'child' and 'grandchild'. It does not matter how many brothers and their wives live together; all the brothers are called 'father', all their wives 'mother' by all the children; if it is necessary to distinguish which 'mother' or 'father' is meant, the child will say 'big mother', 'little mother', and if necessary 'middle mother'; his own mother he will call his 'real mother'. If the married brothers live in different houses the children of the younger brother will still call the elder brother and his wife 'father' and 'mother'; but the sons of the elder brother will call the younger brother 'uncle', and his wife 'potential spouse' (*azong*), for, as will be seen later, they may under certain circumstances inherit her.

The Lepchas count descent nine generations back on the father's side, and at least four on the mother's; a person with whom you share a common ancestor on the paternal side nine generations back is addressed in the same way as your real brothers and sisters, and their parents as though they were the brother and sister-in-law of your father. In theory a person should always be given the correct title reckoning back to this common ancestor, without regard to the relative age of the two people, but when the situation becomes too ridiculous the terms are modified. For example the co-wives of Lumba *chithembu* were 'grandmother' and 'grandchild' (the first wife was the grandchild of a younger brother, the second wife the great-great-grandchild of an elder sister) though there was only nine years difference in their ages; but the younger wife called the elder 'mother', because calling her 'grandmother' made her appear too old. Similarly Tafoor had a half-sister Pankek who was younger than his own children: he therefore told his children to call her by her name until she grew up, as the proper term for an aunt, *a-nyou*, is a very respectful one, and would be brought into ridicule if given to a little girl of six.

551 Except in the case of very young children people are almost always referred to by the proper kinship terms, or by their ecclesiastical or lay titles. Women are practically never named after marriage; they are referred to firstly as their husband's wife, and, as soon as they have borne a child, as their child's mother. Occasionally they are referred to as the inhabitants of the village they were born in. Only occasionally do childless widows start using personal names again. I know the names of very few women in Lingthem, and that is not because of bashfulness on my part or

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law
784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than
[576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

● 601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger
602 brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *aʒong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law, and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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587 If, after a number of years of marriage, a man's wife is sterile,
595 he has a right to apply to his wife's family for a second wife, providing his first wife agrees. The formalities entailed in this request are the same as those which have to be performed after the death of a first wife;[13] an extra preliminary present has to be given, but the subsequent expenses for the marriage are slightly less. In theory it is only permissible to take a second wife from the first wife's *ptso*, and ideally this second wife should be the first wife's real or classificatory younger sister. This is recognised in the terms with
[601] which co-wives are always referred to; the Nepali words *jethi* and *kanchi*, meaning 'eldest sister' and 'youngest sister' are always used; Lepcha has no equivalent terms to indicate the position of a child in the order of birth. In the great majority of cases the ideal conditions are observed, and the two wives, if not actual sisters, are of the same *ptso* and use kinship terms. In cultural theory the co-wives have already an established habit of cooperation and cohabitation which only needs to be renewed, and the situation of co-wife is meant to be an agreeable one. This expectation is not always justified; occasionally co-wives quarrel; but the majority are glad for the companionship of a close relative, and the lessened work which their presence means. The husband is meant to spend alternate nights with each of them.

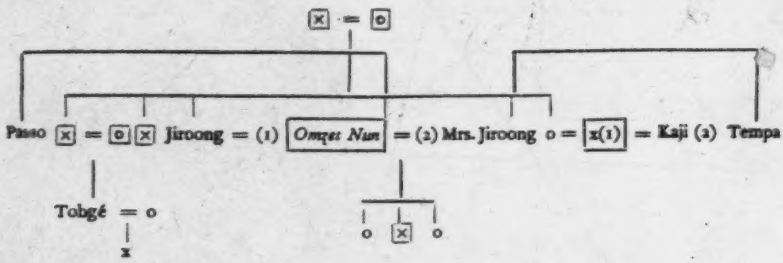
595 In Lingthem there are seven men with two wives each; but only in three cases was the second wife taken because the first wife was sterile. In two of the cases the second wife is indeed only a co-wife by courtesy; Asang gave a home to the middle-aged widow of his elder brother, because she had nowhere else to go; and for the same reason Gongyop took in his wife's sister. In this second case the hospitality was not long accepted; though nearly sixty years old, this woman, Samblyou, with her elder sister Mrs. Takal, is the most promiscuous woman in the village, and after distributing her favours in nearly every direction, including the seduction of a number of the younger boys, she is now cohabiting with Zumba, a widower twelve years younger than herself.

Chala Mandal has had in all four wives in two pairs; the first wife he gave to a 'younger brother', who lived with him; after her death he also gave him her equally sterile sister; this second wife returned to her family after the death of the

[13] See p. 159.

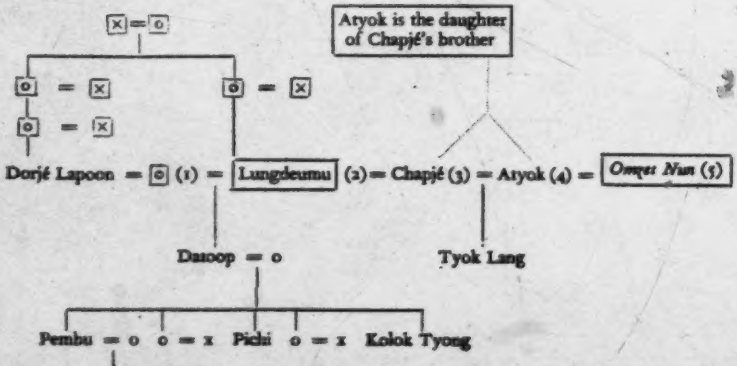
159
601

Genealogy of JIROONG
(Takpo Ptso)



x means man
o means woman
= means marries
☒ ⊡ means dead

Genealogy of FIRST DORJÉ LAPOON
(Sakmi Ptso)



[p. 417]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

APPENDIX II

601

LEPCHA KINSHIP TERMS

(N.B. *m.s.* means 'man speaking'; *w.s.* 'woman speaking'.)

Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
2nd generation ascendant		
THI-KUNG	grandfather	father of spouse, elder brother of spouse, spouse's elder sister's husband, after the birth of a child. *also* any man irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is two generations nearer this ancestor than the speaker. *also* the Old Man in folktales and mythology.
NYI-KUNG	grandmother	(as for Thi-kung for all women)
1st generation ascendant		
A-BO	father	father of spouse; elder brother of spouse (w.s.) husband of elder sister of spouse (w.s.) before birth of child. *also* ingzong (trading friend) of husband (w.s.) *also* respectfully to affinal relations and unrelated people slightly older than speaker.
A-BO THIMBU (contracted to BATHIM)	big father	(1) elder co-husband. (2) father's elder brother: always used if the two brothers live in the same house or neighbourhood, not usually if they live in different villages.
A-BO CHIMBU	little father	(1) younger co-husband. (2) father's younger brother: only used if the two brothers live in the same house.
A-MU	mother	husband's mother (w.s.) wife of husband's elder brother before birth of child (w.s.) *also* wife of ingzong (m.s.) *also* respectfully to slightly older affinal or unrelated women.

601

Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
A-MU THIMBU (contracted to MATHIM)	big mother	(1) elder co-wife. (2) wife of father's elder brother. (3) elder sister of father or mother if living in same house or neighbourhood.
A-MU CHIMBU	little mother	(1) younger co-wife. (N.B. 'little mother' is nearly always the biological mother of the children where there are co-wives.) (2) wife of father's younger brother: only used if living chiefly in same house as speaker.
A-KU	father's (younger) brother	any man whom father calls 'brother'. any male irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker. Any man mother calls 'aku'.
A-JONG	mother's brother	may be, but is not always, applied to any man one generation older than speaker whose relationship, however distant, is traced through a woman.
A-NYOU	lady	(1) younger sister of parent; *also* any woman whom father or mother calls 'sister'; *also* any woman irrespective of age who traces a relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker; *also* the most respectful form of address to any socially superior woman: is used as a title for female supernaturals and Queens. (2) mother of wife (m.s.) elder sister of wife (m.s.).
A-ZONG / OONG-OP	levirate or sororate spouse	*man speaking:* wife of younger brothers of father or mother, of any man called 'aku' or 'ajong'; wife of elder brother; younger sister of wife. *woman speaking:* younger brother of husband; son of husband's elder brother; men husband calls 'younger brother'; son of men husband calls 'elder brother' or 'younger brother' (except his biological younger brothers); husband of elder sister. (note AZONG is more commonly used when there is a generation between the speakers; OONG-OP when they are of the same generation, but there is no uniformity about this. The terms are reciprocal.)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
Ego's generation		
A-NUM	elder brother	any male of ego's generation older than ego and tracing descent back to a common ancestor on either side. (Not always used if the common ancestor is more than four generations removed and the two speakers are not of the same *ptso*,) any otherwise unplaced male of ego's apparent age.
A-NOM	elder sister	(as for A-NUM for women.)
ING	younger sibling	(as for A-NUM for people of either sex younger than ego.)
A-VO	husband	
A-YOU	wife	
BRI-BO / BRI-MU	'marriage father' / 'marriage mother'	used reciprocally by the parents of a married couple.
ONG-ZONG	sibling of spouse / spouse of sibling	used reciprocally by all siblings of the same sex of a married pair. Thus if A (man) marries B (woman) A will call all B's brothers 'ongzong', and B's brothers will call A and his brothers 'ongzong'. Similarly B will so name all A's sisters who will call B and her sisters 'ongzong'; unless they live in the same house or neighbourhood when see above Thi-kung, Nyi-kung, A-bo, A-mu.
1st generation descendant		
ING-HA	infant	any young child.
A-KUP	child	any child.
NYOM	son's wife	*man speaking*: wife of younger brother; wife of sibling's son; *also* bride.
MYOK	daughter's husband	*woman speaking*: husband of younger sister; husband of sibling's daughter; *also* bridegroom.
NAM-KUP	child of sibling	the child of anybody ego or spouse calls 'brother' or 'sister'.
2nd generation descendant		
KUP-LONG	grandchild	any child two generations younger than ego, unless alternative classification allows the use of a kinship term of an elder generation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

601

Lepcha term	*Direct meaning*	*People to whom this term is applied*
Other common terms of address		
A-THING	lord	the most respectful term for a man; used for high officials and male supernaturals.
A-NYOU	lady	the female equivalent to A-thing.
REN (plural) REN-SONG	old man	the usual courtesy form of address to any man or mixed group not markedly younger than speaker.
A-NUM	elder brother	less respectful than the last two terms. generally used to unclassified people of about ego's age, particularly with a view to sexual advances. ING is not used in this way.
A-NOM	elder sister	
Descriptive terms not used in address		
A-FET	father of spouse	also husband of wife's elder sister (m.s.) and wife's elder brother (m.s.).
TAGRI KUP	male child	son.
TA-YOU KUP	female child	daughter.
FLENG	young man	(literally, not having yet produced children.)
NUM-LENG	young woman	
ABO PAYAR	step-father	
AMU PAYAR	step-mother	
JIUT-BO	adopting mother	
JIUT-MU	adopting father	
NUM-NEU	blood relation	(implying a person with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous.)
NUM-NEU-ZONG	relatives	all the people with whom relation by descent can be traced.
PA-MING	brothers	a collective word meaning either all true siblings or more usually all the males the person referred to calls ANUM and ING.
M'SUNG-MU	sisters	(parallel to PA-MING, but referring exclusively to women and usually employed by women.)

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organization.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

601 curious anomaly may be noted. There is only one word to denote both son and daughter; and similarly one word has to do duty for both one's younger (but not elder) brother and sister. When it is required to distinguish the sex of these individuals it is necessary to add the prefix denoting, respectively, male or female. In actual practice this is rarely necessary, except when talking to strangers, who might be expected not to know the composition of any particular family.

In a small community such as Lingtem nearly everybody is able to trace some sort of relationship to everyone else. This is particularly easy, for instance, when a man refers to a person whom we should describe doubtfully as a "cousin several times removed" as his brother. It is, however, extremely confusing to a stranger of an alien culture; but in view of the fact that pedigrees are common property and that there are no skeletons in the Lepcha's cupboards, no such difficulty arises amongst the people themselves. Until one gets used to the system one naturally thinks of two "brothers," for instance, as being sons of the same father. It is, of course, quite possible that they may be; but on the other hand it is equally possible that one is the son of a man whose mother is descended from the other's great-grandmother's sister! But all these details are common property in the village and no confusion arises. To explain them here would need a whole series of complicated charts, the sight of which would undoubtedly cause the reader to lay down this book in disgust. That, however, is a risk I am not willing to take: but in any case, such things are of interest only to experts; and even they, to judge by the uncut pages in the books of some of my friends, are sometimes human!

852 We may now consider the subject of Lepcha home life in general. It will be convenient to start with babies and children, in reading the account of which due allowance should be made for my bachelor prejudice and ignorance!

Three days after a child is born its head is smeared with a mixture of butter and soot, the latter scraped from the family cooking pot. This is believed to hasten the closing

23: Benedict
● 601

ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For a linguistic confirmation of the kinship terms used in this source, see category 197./

197 borrowed form nak as found in nak-c'o "the black arts" (Tib. nag-p'yogs) and other obviously recent loan-words. Yet the true native term is rather (a-)tyang "black, dark", cognate with Tsangla tsang, Kachin ang "black" (Lepcha has medial a, probably from TB *ā, in a number of important roots). So also nok "ink" from Tib. snag, unquestionably a loan-word but showing the o < a shift (if truly cognate the form would be

601 *nyok rather than nok, vide infra). It is apparent, then, that the general semantic setting as well as the phonological development of a given Lepcha word must be considered in making our identification of it as native or Tibetan. That this is especially true of kinship terminology will be shown in the annotations below.

Lepcha Consanguineal Terms

		(a-)zo gGF	
nyi-kung gM		t'i-kung gF	
(a-)mo M		(a-)bo F	
(a-)mo tim(-bo) FoSi,MoSi		(a-)bo tim(-bo) FoB	
(a-)mo cum(-bo) MySi		(a-)bo cum(-bo) FyB	
(a-)nyu FSi,MSi		(a-)ku FB (a-)žong MB	
(a-)nom oSi,pxC		(a-)nŭm oB,pxC	
	yeng ySb,pxC	nu yB	
	(a-)kŭp Ch		
	{nŭm-kŭp nom-kŭp} SbCh		
	{kŭp-zong (a-)zom} gCh		
	nyi-t'i ggCh		

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Lepcha Affinal Terms

fyăt-nyo M1 (a-)fyăt F1

(a-)yu W (a-)vo H

(a-)gong FyBW,MyBW,oBW,WySi(all ms);
(a-)ngop HoBS,HyB,oSiH(all ws)

ong-gong SbS1(ss)

nyom SW,ySW(ms),SbSW(ms) myok DH,ySiH(ws),SbDH(ws)

Notes:

The two grandparent terms include the element kung "tree", which functions here as a categorical term. The element t'i is identical with t'i "to be related", cognate with Tib. t'e-ba "to appertain to", and appears also in t'it-bo "a relative" (with morphological -t suffix). The element nyi is not so readily analyzed. It is represented in a-nyi, an expletive for a-go "love", and tă-nyi, an expletive for tă-yu "woman", as well as in nyit "to cherish" (with -t suffix). For the Lepcha system of expletives (semantic doublets), e.g. man ~ kit "flesh", făt ~ lek "earth" (pă-lek "a parcel of ground"), fo ~ yu "bird", vyeng ~ grong "door,window" (tă-grong "ladder"), see Mainwaring's Grammar, 136-37. This root (*nyi) must be compared with Tib. nye-ba "to be near", nye-mo "near" , used figuratively, as in nye-mo je-pa "to love, e.g. parents loving their children or vice versa" (Central Tibetan), nye-ba-rnams "relations, sanguinity", nye-ts'an, nye-rigs "relative, kinsman", and gnyen "kinsman, relative"; for

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the vocalism, cf. Lepcha mi "fire", Tib. me; Lepcha a-li "tongue", Tib. lce < *c-le. The elements *nyi and *t'i are combined in the term nyi-t'i ~ nyi-t'ǐ, probably ggCh, ggS (Stocks), but defined also as gCh and as gggCh (MB, in different places), and nyi-t'o ggD (Stocks).

Both grandparent terms are extended. e.g. t'i-kung denotes also "any man irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is two generations nearer this ancestor than the speaker" (Gorer). In Lepcha folktales and mythology, t'i-kung stands for the "Old Man" (Gorer) or the "progenitor of the Rong-folk" (t'i-kung-tek, Stocks), and nyi-kung-ngal (Stocks) for his wife.

The parallelism in grandparent-grandchild terms indicated above can be traced further. Thus, MG gives the following scheme:

nyi-t'i gCh	t'i-kung gF
nyi-t'ing ggCh	t'i-kung-t'ing ggF
nyi-t'it gggCh	t'i-kung-t'in gggF
nyi-t'it-tek ggggCh	t'i-kung-tek ggggF

Most of these terms are primarily literary. Both t'in and t'it are probably derivatives of t'i "to be related", but note also (a-)t'in "a time, a generation". The other elements are t'ing "lord, master", tek "to be finished or ended", tek-bo "the last", as in yeng tek-bo "the last child". MG further cites nyi-kung-nyo ggM, nyi-kung-ngal gggM, and nyi-kung-pum ggggM, as well as t'i-kung-pum gggggF (also

601 "the head of the ancestors"). The botanical semasiology of kung "tree" (supra) is continued in the above terms; cf. ngal "to be short and thick", a-ngal "the head end, a short end of yam or other vegetable" (tek-ngal "progenitors, founders of a race"), and pum "to issue from, be the origin", a-pum "the chief sprout of plants", pum-bo "the chief, the principal, God".

Of especial interest is the term (a-)zo ggF (Stocks), which is certainly a direct representative of Tibeto-Burman *za Ch,gCh. The derivative in final -n is (a-)zon "grandchild, posterity", zon-kup ~ zon-nyin ~ zon-nyin-kup "offspring, descendants" (nyin is the derivative in final -n from *nyi, supra), a-kup a-zon "my own child (an expression of endearment of mother)", but zon defined simply as "creatures, men" (cf. Spanish criatura, Italian creatura). In the Lepcha term (a-)zo, therefore, we have strong evidence for grandparental reciprocity.

The terms used for the paternal and maternal pedigrees reflect Lepcha notions of physiology similar to those held by the Tibetans. The term for pedigree itself is (a-)gyit, from gyit "to follow"; cf. Tib. brgyud "lineage", rgyud "string", rgyud-pa "to file on a string", rgyun "a continual flowing, the flow, current or stream", rgyu-ba "to go, move, wander". For "male pedigree", Lepcha has t'ing gyit (t'ing "lord", supra), also a-hrit a-gyit, a-hrit zong "male branch of family", from (a-)hrit "home". The corresponding

601 feminine term is nyo gyit "pedigree on female side", whence the alternative terms nyo-kung ~ nyi-kung gM, nyo-kung-nyo nyi-kung-nyo ggM. Etymologically, nyo is an expletive of vi "blood", but the Tibetan cognate is nya "tendon, sinew, muscle", hence the term refers fundamentally to the flesh rather than to the blood. The parallelism with Tib. rus(-pa) "bone" and ʼsa "flesh" is complete. The native theory is thus expressed by Gorer (p. 283):

> .....the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the flesh and blood.

Stocks (p. 465) makes a similar statement:

> .....the mother's relations are considered to be of much nearer kin than the father's. The Lep-cha believe it to be only the father who transmits bone to his offspring, while from the mother they obtain their flesh and blood.

The alternation of nyo with nyi in the gM, ggM terms suggests that nyi is associated with the maternal side (cf. Tib. nye-ba "to be near" , supra), t'i with the paternal side (cf. t'i "to be related"). The merging of the ascending lines would thus appear to be analogical, contrasting with the real merging of the descending lines shown in the "fused" terms nyi-t'i gCh, nyi-t'it gggCh, and nyi-t'ing ggCh (t'ing for t'i, vide supra).

Lepcha (a-)mo M and (a-)bo F (often mu, bu in modern pronunciation) represent the regular Tibeto-Burman roots *ma and *ba. These terms in themselves, unlike the grandparent terms, are not extended, but a type of quasi-extension is found in (a-)mo tim(-bo) FoSi,MoSi, (a-)bo tim(-bo) FoB

601 (ti-m "great, large"), (a-)mo cum(-bo) MySi, (a-)bo cum(-bo) FyB (cu-m "small, little"). It is clear from Gorer's annotations that these combined terms are used only when the relatives in question reside in or near the house of the speaker. Thus, Gorer defines a-mo cum-bo (a-mu chimbu) only as "younger co-wife", and "wife of father's younger brother; only used if living chiefly in same house as speaker", but among the Lepcha the younger co-wife is ordinarily MySi (real or classificatory). Of a-bo tim-bo Gorer remarks: "always used if the two brothers live in the same house or neighborhood, not usually if they live in different villages"; a-bo cum-bo is said to be "only used if the two brothers live in the same house"; a-mo tim-bo is defined as "elder sister of father or mother if living in same house or neighborhood". In affinal usage, a-bo tim-bo is "elder co-husband", a-bo cum-bo is "younger co-husband", and a-mo tim-bo is "elder co-wife".

Lepcha (a-)ku FB, (a-)ǩong MB, and (a-)nyu FSi, MSi constitute an entirely distinct set of terms. Like the grandparent terms, they are subject to extension. Gorer defines a-ku as "any man whom father calls 'brother'; any male irrespective of age who traces relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker; any man mother calls 'aku'", a-ǩong as "mother's brother; may be, but is not always, applied to any man one generation older than speaker whose

601 relationship, however distant, is traced through a woman", and a-nyu as "younger sister of parent; also any woman whom father or mother calls 'sister'; also any women irrespective of age who traces a relationship to a common ancestor and who is one generation nearer this ancestor than speaker". The status of the terms a-ku and a-ǰong is debatable, in view of the close correspondences with Tib. ʾa-k'u and ʾa-ǰang. The initial aspirated k' of Tibetan loan-words is usually retained in Lepcha, in which it is phonemically aberrant, e.g. k'e ~ k'o "mouth" (Tib. k'a), k'u "bread" (Tib. k'ur), k'ye ~ k'e "profit" (Tib. k'ye ~ k'e), but Tibetan itself has the fluctuation ʾa-k'u ~ a-ku (produced by the a- prefix) and the Lepcha form a-ku may be based on the latter. The term a-ǰong is rendered somewhat suspect by the initial ǰ-, which is on the whole an atypical element in Lepcha but is stander' in Tibetan loan-words, e.g. ǰi "4" (Tib. bǰi), ǰung "middle" (Tib. gǰung). Lepcha a-nyu FSi,MSi is a varient of nyo, a categorical term applied to relatives of the uterine line (vide supra); the phonetic development parallels that shown by mu < mo ", bu < bo F, tsu <tso "to cook", un < on "horse", and others. MG cites a-nyu "aunt", but a-nyo "lady, queen", but Gorer has a-nyu also in the meaning "the most respectful form of address to any socially superior woman: is used as a title for female supernaturals and Queens". It is the female equivalent of a-t'ing "the most respectful term for a man; used for high

601 officials and male supernaturals". Since t'ing has a categorical usage exactly paralleling that of nyo (supra), the equivalence nyo = nyu is established.

The three sibling terms, also extended to include parallel and cross cousins, are (a-)nom oSi, (a-)nŭm oB, and yeng (also eng, ing) ySb. The additional term, nu (Tib. nu ~ no), though defined in MG as yB, seems to be used only in the stable compound nŭm-nu "blood relation (implying a person with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous)" (Gorer), "relations, relatives" (MG), nŭm-nu nim-yeng "relatives, connexions", nŭm-nu-ka t'i "to be related", nŭm-nu tyol-nu "friends and acquaintances", and in stereotyped phrases of the type bo-nu "father and family", mo-nu "mother and children". The term nŭm oB itself is a derivative in -m from the root *nu (see the discussion above). The combined term nŭm-nu is formally comparable with Tib. p'u-nu but functionally comparable with Tib. spun. Lepcha a-nom < *nam oSi is cognate with Gyarung anom < *snam Si (and cf. the discussion of nyom below), while yeng ySb appears to be related to Tsangla -ying (cf. nyel "gums", Tib. snyil). MG cites yeng tă-yu ySi, yeng tă-gri yB, with the sex-suffixes, but this distinction is not ordinarily made. As in Tibetan, the age distinction is of primary importance. According to Gorer (p. 166), the Nepali terms for oSi and ySi have been borrowed as descriptive terms for the co-wives:

•601 This [that the co-wife should be the ySi of the first wife] is recognized in the terms with which co-wives are always referred to; the Nepali words jethi and kanchi, meaning 'eldest sister' and 'youngest sister' are always used; Lepcha has no equivalent terms to indicate the position of a child in the order of birth.

Gorer's statement is perhaps inexact, since both MG and Stocks cite analogous native Lepcha terms, e.g. nŭm-fren eB, nŭm-hlep-bo yB (Stocks). Since almost no Nepali loan-words exist in the language, the use of Nepali terms in this specific connection presents a definite problem, much as Kanauri bai yB and other loan-words already encountered.

The neuter sibling term, (a-)kŭp, is a new element. The terms ta-yŭ kŭp D, ta-gri kŭp S, are used only in a descriptive way, according to Gorer. A-kŭp itself can be extended (Gorer defines it as "any child"), but the extended usage is more properly represented by nom-kŭp SiCh, nŭm-kŭp BCh (Gorer and Stocks tend to confuse these two terms under the single form nŭm-kŭp, which is merely a variant of nŭm-kŭp, but the distinction is clearly made in MG). MG also cites a-ku kŭp "paternal cousin" and a-ŭong kŭp "maternal cousin" (probably descriptive), as well as a-nyu kŭp "nephew, niece, child of elder brother" (perhaps through the honorific nature of the term a-nyu). The normal gCh term is kŭp-zong, in which kŭp is combined with the element zong (analyzed below). It is extended to include "any child two generations younger than ego" (Gorer), and can show sex distinction (probably descriptive only), viz. kŭp-zong tŭ-yu gD, kŭp-zong tŭ-gri gS. For the terms (a-)zon and nyi-t'i, see the discussion above.

601 The affinal terminology presents several new terms (listed in the table) and a number of consanguineal terms used affinally. The terms used in any given instance depend in large measure on the composition of the family and the residence of the spouse's kin. The following excerpt from Gorer (p. 143) gives the essential points:

> Old age is considered by the Lepchas to be a desirable quality; the polite term of address to anybody you are not related to is 'old man'; and there is a tendency to push anybody older than the speaker into a higher generation. Thus, when a man has had a child he calls his wife's parents 'grandfather' and 'grandmother', and the parents call their own elder brothers and sisters 'father' and 'mother'; the wife's elder brother, or her elder sister's husband (and conversely) are equated with her father. The opposite tendency is also manifested towards the wives of younger brothers (the elder brother calls them 'daughters-in-law') and the husbands of younger sisters (the elder sister calls them 'sons-in-law'). In the joint family which dwells under a single roof only nine terms are normally used: 'grandfather', 'grandmother', 'father', 'mother', 'elder brother', 'elder sister', 'younger brother-or-sister', 'child' and 'grandchild'. It does not matter how many brothers and their wives live together; all the brothers are called 'father', all their wives 'mother' by all the children; if it is necessary to distinguish which 'mother' or 'father' is meant, the child will say 'big mother', 'little mother', and if necessary 'middle mother'; his own mother he will call his 'real mother'. If the married brothers live in different houses the children of the younger brother will still call the elder brother and his wife 'father' and 'mother'; but the sons of the elder brother will call the younger brother 'uncle', and his wife 'potential spouse' (azong), for, as will be seen later, they may under certain circumstances inherit her.

In this extension of consanguineal terms, the use of teknonymy and the equation of elder sibling of spouse with parent of spouse are prominent features. Thus, before the birth of a child, a-bo is used for SpF, SpoB, SpoSiH, while after the birth of a child t'i-kung is used to denote these

• 601 same affinal kin. The definitions of affinal kin in Stocks and Gorer are not sufficiently precise to enable us to fix the status of (a-)fyăt Fl, fyăt-nyo Ml (only in MG), and (a-)nyu Ml. Gorer specifies that a-fyăt is a descriptive term not used in address, and notes that, like a-bo and t'i-kung, it denotes WoSiH and WoB as well as "father of spouse", while a-nyu denotes both WM and WoSi. The avuncular terms, a-ku and a-ǎong, are not used to denote kin of spouse (contrast a-ku cum-bo FyB, a-fyăt cum-bo WFyB, in Stocks), but a-nyu is used for FBW and MBW as well as for FSi, MSi, and Ml. Since a-nyu is not matched by a corresponding masculine term (a-fyăt is descriptive), it is likely that its use for Ml merely represents one aspect of its general honorific application.

The reciprocal term a-zong ~ a-ngop is defined by Gorer as "levirate or sororate spouse", since it denotes the marriageable affinal kin of Ego. Gorer observes that "Azong is more commonly used when there is a generation between the speakers; Oong-op when they are of the same generation, but there is no uniformity about this". He further notes that the term is used for "wife of younger brothers of father or mother, of any man called 'aku' or 'ajong'". The implication here must be that the terms a-ku and a-ǎong are applied only to FyB and MyB, respectively; yet Gorer, after giving "father's (younger) brother" as the "direct meaning" of the term a-ku, notes that it is applied to "any man whom father calls 'brother'". Similarly,

601 a-nyu is defined as "(1) younger sister of parent; also any woman whom father or mother calls 'sister'". As explained by Gorer in the excerpt cited above, the term "father" (i.e. a-bo tim-bo) is applied to the father's elder brother even when living in a different house, while the father's younger brother under the same circumstances is called "uncle" (i.e. a-ku). Neither Stocks nor MG, however, make any similar distinction in the terms a-ku and a-zong. The apparent discrepancy is perhaps to be explained on the assumption that these terms in address are used only for FyB and MyB but in reference are applied to FB and MB without age distinction.

The term a-ngop < *ngap (oong-op in Gorer) is linguistically isolated (it may be cognate with Bahing ngwap-aya "cousin"), but a-zong has an interesting connection with the final element of kŭp-zong gCh and ong-zong Sbl (vide infra). It is quite distinctefrom a-žong MB, which is either cognate with or borrowed from Tib. ʾa-žang (but MG mistakenly cites the meaning FSiH for a-zong rather than for a-žong). The basic meaning of zong ~ zăng is "like, after the manner of", as in bik zong "like a cow" (bik "cow"). It is used also in the meaning "fellow, companion, one's own kind or sex", e.g. lom-zong "fellow-traveller" (lom "road"), tă-do zong "one's own people" (tă-do "self"), nŭm-zong "friends, relatives", nŭm-nu-zong "relatives (all the people with whom relation by descent can be traced)"

601 (contrast nŭm-nu "blood relation", implying a person with whom sexual intercourse would be incestuous), a-hrăt-zong "male branch of family" (a-hrăt "bone", vide supra). The basic signification of the term a-zong is thus "the coupler", "one with whom coupling (copulation) is allowed". The o ~ ă alternation points to an original ŭ vocalism (vide the introductory remarks), hence we can safely identify this root with Tib. zung "a pair, a couple".

The reciprocal term ong-zong Sbl(ss) is applied both to SpSb(ss) and SbSp(ss). The element zong is here combined with ong "a child", which appears in a number of combinations, e.g. ong-kŭp "child", ong tă-yu (fem.) and ong tă-gri (masc.) "child from the ages of 3-10", ong nŭm-lyeng (fem.) and ong fă-lyeng (masc.) "young person from the age of 10 to maturity" (note nŭm-lyeng "girl, young female", but nŭm oB), ong-lot "children in a general sense". MG cites ong-zong simply as "companion, comrade, fellow-workman". The development of ong-zong Sbl from ong Ch parallels the use of nyom SW for yBW and of myok DH for ySiH (vide infra).

The terms nyom SW and myok DH have been analogously extended to include non-marriageable affinal kin of different sex from speaker, primarily yBW(ms) and ySiH(ws). The tendency toward serial equations in the affinal terminology thus appears here also; Ego(ms) equates his WF with his WoB, and his DH with his yBW.

It will be observed that a medial y element appears in three affinal terms, viz. a-fyăt, nyom, and myok. The

601 linguistic clue to these forms is given by the Lepcha causative formation with a so-called "infixed y", e.g. pok "to cast down", pyok "to cause to cast down"; t'or "to escape, get free", t'yor "to let go, set free" (Tib. t'ar-ba "to become free"); rop "to stick, adhere", ryop "to affix, attach"; nak "to be straight" , nyak "to make straight". Since infixation is entirely foreign to Tibeto-Burman morphology, these verbal forms stand in need of explanation. As described in the Introduction (pt. 1), the regular Tibeto-Burman causative formation involves the prefix s-, as in Tib. 'k'or-ba "to turn round", skor-ba "to surround"; 'p'ur-ba "to fly", spur-ba "to make fly" (Tibetan regularly has '- or m- intransitive prefix). The loss of prefixed s- may affect the initial; thus in Burmese the initial is aspirated, e.g. pran "to be full", p'ran "to fill"; lwat "to be free", hlwat "to set free". This phonetic effect is seen also in nominal forms, e.g. Burmese (a-)t'ong "1,000", Tib. stong; Burmese hna "nose", Tib. sna. Lepcha has only a few s- prefixed forms, of secondary origin, and there can be no question but that the loss of original s- prefix has palatalized the initials. The parallelism is sometimes seen in the same root, e.g. Lepcha nom "to smell" (intr.), nyom (tr.); Tib. snam-pa "to smell" (intr.), snam-pa ~ snom-pa ~ snum-pa (tr.). The point is neatly demonstrated in the Lepcha form myǎn "to be ripe" (also a-mǎn "ripe, cooked"), which theoretically should be transitive rather than intransitive;

601 the anamoly is explained by Tib. smin-pa "to be ripe, ripen" (intr.), Burmese hmaṅ ~ hmyaṅ "to be ripe", which are similarly intransitive in meaning though transitive in form. Cf. also Lepcha nyo "snot", Tib. sna "nose", Burmese hna "nose" ; the semantic shift in the Lepcha word is indicated by (a-)nyo, expletive of (a-)mik "eye", which parallels Burmese myak-hna "face".

This long digression is required to clarify the terms a-fyăt F1, nyom D1, and myok S1. The derivation nyom < *snam makes possible a direct comparison with Kanauri stem < *snem D1 and Gyarung snom < *snam S1, while myok < *smak (Tib. mag-pa) must be interpreted as an analogous development (but cf. Burmese sa-mak). The term (a-)fyăt indicates an original *sput (Lepcha f- and p- often interchange, e.g. far ~ a-far "price", par "to buy", cognate with Tib. p'ar "exchange, agio", Gyarung m-p'ar "to be for sale"), and *sput can be only a collective term (with morphological -t) paralleling Tib. spun Sb(ss), derived from p'u-bo oS. The equation of SpoB with SpF has been noted above. Lepcha (a-)fyăt < *sput F1 is thus partly analogical with (and cognate with) Tib. spun < p'u(-bo) oB, and partly analogical with Tib. shud-po F1,B1 < k'u(-bo) FB.

The remaining affinal terms are (a-)yu W and (a-)vo H. The former is simply the root for "female" (tă-yu), cognate with the root *yu "female" that has appeared elsewhere (e.g. Kanauri yu-med M1), perhaps also with Tib. yu-bo ~ yu-mo "ox or cow having no horns; hind, female of a stag". Lepcha

601 a-vo N is from a root *wa (v- < w-, as in vi "blood", TB *wi; vot "bee", Kanauri wăs "honey"), which appears in the meaning "male", also "father" in some of the groups discussed below. Lepcha tă-gri "male" is probably cognate with Tib. bgre-ba "to grow old" (Lepcha i = Tib. e, supra). The term bo F appears in the sense "entire non-emasculated animal", e.g. mon-bo "boar" (mon "pig"), and the variant (a-)bu is used for "male sex of animals". Lepcha also has (a-)tsu "the male of goats, pigs, sheep", e.g. lŭk a-tsu "ram" (lŭk "sheep").

Morphological -t suffixes appear in (a-)mit "female, woman of superior beings", e.g. rŭm-mit "goddess" (rŭm "god"), from a form *mi cognate with Tib. *me (in bud-med), which is represented also in the phrase nŭm-nu mim-yeng " relatives, connexions" (MG); and in (a-)mot "the female of animals" (sometimes of human beings, as in yu-mot "woman"), which is from a form *mo identical with mo < *ma M. The morphological -t group of terms in Lepcha thus includes (a-)fyăt < *sput F1, (a-)mit "female (human)", and (a-)mot "female (animal)".

The Tibetan loan-words in the Lepcha kinship terminology merit especial examination. The following terms have been recorded (we omit a-ku FB and a-zong MB, which are of doubtful status):

601

Lepcha < Tibetan Terms

ma M	p'a F
yŭm M (resp.)	yap F (resp.)
mo-sŭng-mo Sl	p'a-ming B
pŭn Sb	
se Ch (resp.)	
	ku-mok Sl

The terms ma M and p'a F, with the respectful equivalents yŭm (also yăm) M and yap F, closely correspond to their Tibetan prototypes, while se "son or daughter of a great man" is merely a dialectical form of sras. Lepcha mo-sŭng-mo has been borrowed from Tib. sring-mo Sl(ms) via a dialect of Central Tibetan type (probably Dĕnjonkĕ, spoken in Sikkim), as shown by the treatment of initial sr-; Lepcha has prefixed mo, and has changed the vocalism as in many other Tibetan loan-words, e.g. tsŭk-po < rtsig-pa "wall", k'yŭm < k'yim "house", yŭk < yig "letter". Lepcha p'a-ming is from Tib. p'a-ming "relations on the father's side". Gorer lists the Lepcha term as descriptive, and gives the following definition: "a collective word meaning either all true siblings or more usually all the males the person referred to calls anum and ing." The same authority defines mo-sŭng-mo (m'sung-mu) as "parallel to pa-ming, but referring exclusively to women and usually employed by women". Stocks gives mu-sang-mu FBD,FSiD, a-num p'a-ming FBS,MBS, i.e. exclusively collateral terms, yet on p. 469 she states

601 that "Pha-ming is an idiom.....meaning the elder or younger brother, and the word musang-mu is another word denoting a sister of any age". MG defines mo-sŭng-mo as "sister, female cousin" (agreeing rather with Gorer), but for p'a-ming offers only the literal Tibetan translation "paternal name", though Grünwedel brings Tib. ming-po B(sw) into comparison. On the analogy with p'a-ming, the term mo-sŭng-mo can be analyzed as mo + sŭng-mo, with mo M for Tib. ma through the influence of the final -mo suffix. Tibetan does not have the compound ma-sring-mo, and employs p'a-ming only in its literal connotation ("father's name"). Gorer indicates that mo-sŭng-mo is employed by women rather than by men, whereas the Tibetan term (sring-mo) is exclusively a man's term. The Lepcha term nŭm-mu, lit. "oB and yB", has been extended to include blood relatives in general, hence a need may have been felt for a descriptive collective sibling term. In any case it is evident that considerable semantic distortion has taken place.

Lepcha pŭn, defined by MG as "brother and sister, hospitality", and used in the phrases ma-pŭn-zong "relations on mother's side", p'a-pŭn-zong (also p'a-pŭn-zŭng) "paternal, belonging to the father", constitutes another good example of shift of meaning in loan-words. The Tibetan original is spun "brother, sisters (same sex); cousins, brothers- or sisters-in-law", and the corresponding phrases in Tibetan are ma-spun "brothers and sisters of the same

601 mother", p'a-spun "brothers and sisters of the same father". The Tibetan word can be applied only to siblings of the same sex, while the Lepcha term includes siblings of both sexes (Tibetan renders this idea by ming-sring). The element pun further appears to enter into pun-se "relations" (MG), which must be equated with Gorer's term ptso, the designation for the exogamous patrilineal group. The form cited by Gorer is of non-Lepcha type and a borrowing is clearly indicated, though the final element -so (or -tso) has not yet been identified. Cf. Tibetan p'a-spun, similarly used for the patrilineal group (see the discussion in pt. 2).

The remaining Tibetan loan-word, ku-mok Sl, is defined by MG as "a man who has not paid his marriage-fee", and ku-mok myok as "a son-in-law who has not paid his marriage-fee". In this source the term is derived from Tib. rku-mag(-pa), the first element standing for Tib. rku-ba "to steal". This compound does not exist in Tibetan, however, and is scarcely of Tibetan type. The form -mok must be regarded as a loan-word, contrasting with the native term myok (analyzed above), but the first element cannot be identified. Gorer (pp. 156-57) explains komok myok as a "resident son-in-law":

> In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property.

Gorer further observes that this arrangement "is not very popular or very common", and adds that there are only

601 two komok myok in the village of Lingthem, both maladjusted individuals. As shown above (pt. 3), Kanauri has similarly borrowed the Tibetan term in the form mak-pa, used in precisely the same sense. The inference must be that this cultural item has diffused from Tibet along with the term used to designate it, though the Tibetan term itself naturally lacks this precise connotation. The parallelism in groups so distinct as Kanauri and Lepcha is especially worthy of attention.

The Lepcha kinship terminology, which has been presented above in some detail, closely reflects the marriage regulations and incest ideas of this people. The patrilineal clan (ptso) is an exogamic unit, in practice if not strictly in theory:

> In theory people of the same ptso are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same ptso is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same ptso marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it. (Gorer, p. 148)

There are also matrilineal restrictions on marriage, though these are apparently less severe. Gorer (p. 148) states:

> It is allowable to marry back into a mother's ptso after four generations, but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorje Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (a-nyou); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

•601 Stocks (p. 469) states that cross-cousin marriage (assumedly MBCh) is permitted on rare occasions:

.....the Lep-cha is not permitted to marry his cross-cousin, though should one be a widow having no children, the matter could be gone into by a council of the village folk, who would come together and discuss it, permitting it to take place on occasions.

The lack of cross-cousin marriage is correlated with the lack of any significant categorical equations. As indicated above, the use of a-nyu for Ml, FBW, and MBW, as well as FBi, MBi, merely reflects the peculiarly honorific nature of this term, which in turn is dependent on its etymology (a-nyo, an expletive of vi "blood", used to denote the uterine lineage). The merging of the collateral and the central lines in the sibling terms is also consistent with these bilateral marriage restrictions.

The Lepcha regulations affecting affinal kin reflect a single fundamental distinction, viz. that between siblings of different birth order. The Lepcha are ordinarily monogamous, though (sororal) polygyny and even polyandry may be practised under certain conditions. Both the levirate and sororate are in force, however, and a man has free sexual access to all his potentially hereditable wives. Gorer (p. 160) states the regulations as follows:

Among the Lepchas a man can inherit the wives of all his <u>elder</u> brothers, real or classificatory, the wives of all his paternal and maternal uncles real or classificatory, provided these 'uncles' are younger than his parents but not younger than himself, and all the <u>younger</u> sisters of his wife, real or classificatory. Conversely a woman can be inherited by all her husband's younger brothers, all the sons of her husband's uncles, and all the husbands of her elder sisters, real or classificatory.

601 Infractions of these regulations are regarded as fully incestuous, even though no blood relatives are involved. Terminologically, the potential spouse is designated by an especial term, a-zong ~ a-ngop, which may have originally shown a distinction between potential spouses of the same generation as Ego and those of a different generation (see the discussion above), and the remaining affinal kin, of different sex from Ego, are equated in accordance with age distinctions. Thus, a man equates his yBW and SbSW with his SW (nyom), and his WoSi with his WM (a-nyu), while a woman equates her ySiH and SbDH with her DH (myok), and her HoB with her HF (a-bo, before birth of child; t'i-kung, after birth of child).

Gorer develops the theory that the jus connubii enjoyed by the younger brother represents a social device serving to reduce intra-group friction. The gist of his argument is given in the following excerpt:

> I have already suggested that the ptso was possibly earlier a geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible that these permissive regulations [jus connubii] were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the ptso as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations, the Lepchas have reduced intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands [they are in the hands of the paternal or maternal uncles]; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. (pp. 161-62)

601 This explanation appears to be something of a rationalization, i.e. the fact that the younger brother may have exclusive rights to certain females seems to be incidental. The Lepcha regard marriage as "not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups" (Gorer, p. 158). The rights to sexual intercourse merely represent one aspect of the group rights in general, but these rights are regulated by the dominant age distinctions, hence the general preferential status of the elder sibling (elder child) is reflected in the marriage regulations. Thus, a man has sexual access to his ~ySi but not to his ~oSi, and a woman is accessible to her HyB but not to her HoB. From the purely masculine point of view (that in Gorer), however, the yB (HyB) has access to his oB~, while the oB (HoB) does not have access to his yB~; from the feminine point of view, the ySi (~ySi) is accessible to her oSiH, while the oSi (~oSi) is not accessible to her ySiH. The Lepcha point of view is not so much that of two lines (bilateral) as of two lineages or clans (ptso), each of whom contributes a partner to the marriage; the age distinctions must be observed regardless of whether this partner is male or female.

Where affinal kin of two different generations are involved the principle of age distinctions is applied somewhat differently. The gap of a generation necessitates an adjustment in the concept of age. Actually a man

601 equates his FyB(os) with his own oB, and his FyB(ys) with his own yB. A man may inherit his FyBW only if his FyB is not younger than himself. Neither FoBW nor FyBW are listed by Gorer (p. 151) as blood relatives with whom sexual relations are considered incestuous, hence we can assume that a man has sexual access to but may not marry the wife of his FyB(ys). At one point the age principle comes into conflict with a Lepcha aversion toward the sharing of a single female by a father and son. The situation is not regarded as really incestuous, but is socially frowned upon. Gorer makes the following observation:

> It is considered very wicked, though the act will only affect the actual performers [incest affects the community as a whole], for a man and his son to sleep with the same woman, or a mother and her daughter with the same man; if this is done the line will die out. This situation does however occur occasionally.....Although such behaviour is very disgraceful instances of it are recounted with considerable relish, and not with the shocked embarrassment with which stories of true incest are recounted; it is a bad thing to do, but there is something rather attractive and dare-devil about it. (p. 152)

Since a son theoretically has access to his father's elder brothers' wives, it is apparent that a conflict can sometimes arise. The Lepcha solve the problem in a rather awkward fashion, by having the father inform his son as to which of these potential spouses he has slept with; if the father has slept with any of these wives, the son is forbidden access to her (Gorer, p. 153). Since the Lepcha male seldom fails to take full advantage of his fraternal rights (cf. Gorer, pp. 160 sq.) the theoretical conflict must fail to

601 materialize in most instances, provided that the son be adequately forewarned. In any event the situation is an awkward one, even though the Lepcha are not reticent about their sexual life. It indicates, perhaps, that the principle of age distinction is not yet fully integrated in a society which in most respects forms a well-knit unit (Gorer does not develop the point).

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1 [For abbreviations, see this source in cat. 113, ALl Southeast Asia ALl - Analyst]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SIX

THE RULES OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

i

When a Lepcha speaks of 'we' he generally means all the people of his village. But besides these geographical divisions Lepchas are divided up into other groups by birth and marriage; these groups are the patrilineal clan, or *ptso*, and the immediate and extended family. Unlike their neighbours, the Nepali, the Lepchas have a very small number of kinship terms;[1] fewer even than we have, for they exclude all the category of cousins, and, except for the mother's brothers, make no distinction between the paternal and maternal lines. For people younger than the speaker, too, they do not make any distinction of sex; the same word is used for a younger brother or a younger sister, for a son or a daughter, for a nephew or a niece. Only in the case of children's spouses are different words used for son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Old age is considered by the Lepchas to be a desirable quality; the polite term of address to anybody you are not related to is 'old man'; and there is a tendency to push anybody older than the speaker into a higher generation. Thus, when a man has had a child he calls his wife's parents 'grandfather' and 'grandmother', and the parents call their own elder brothers and sisters 'father' and 'mother'; the wife's elder brother, or her elder sister's husband (and conversely) are equated with her father. The opposite tendency is also manifested towards the wives of younger brothers (the elder brother calls them 'daughters-in-law') and the husbands of younger sisters (the elder sister calls them 'sons-in-law'). In the joint family which dwells under a single roof only nine terms are normally used: 'grandfather', 'grandmother', 'father',

[1] A complete list of Lepcha kinship terms and other common forms of address are given in Appendix II.

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551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law 784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than [576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger ● 602 brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *azong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

considered rather shameless, is not stigmatised as incestuous or even immoral, and there are no sanctions against it. The boy is meant to respect the name of 'mother', but whether he does or not, 'depends entirely on the hearts of the two people concerned.'

A Lepcha is expected to respect his parents and grand-parents, his parents-in-law, and his sons- and daughters-in-law. Of these 'respect-full' situations by far the most important is that between a Lepcha and his parents-in-law. A person is more respectful to his spouse's parents than to his own; he uses more honorific words to them and is careful never to use directly obscene language in front of them. A person must never witness his parents-in-law copulating nor must he be seen doing so by them. Should either of these situations arise the elders will be ashamed and angry.

The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law; and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

In theory equal modesty of speech and behaviour should be shown in front of one's own parents and siblings of the opposite sex, but in point of fact in Zongu it is not; one of the things that most shocked our Lepcha servants, who came from the mixed

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their
717 own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat
592 subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort,
622 and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This I did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared into the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

* * * * *

602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show, by means of charts, the connection between the various people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either by blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general account such as this, however, these details would not make for easy reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them for publication in some appropriate scientific journal.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a 243 different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as [242] this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a [426] plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are 242 used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this 243 morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved 602 a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
[602] (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
[311] I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

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The tensest of all situations, and one which lasts during the whole life-time of both parties is the relation between a man and his wife's mother, and a woman and her husband's father. These relationships are always rather strained and uncomfortable. If for instance a man's mother-in-law says something immodest, the man himself will feel uncomfortable, and may get up and go away. For a man the situation is most uncomfortable in the period between his betrothal and his bringing his wife home. During that period he has to spend about half his time in his father-in-law's home, helping him in his work; he is almost treated as a servant, under the orders of his father-in-law, and has to be modest and circumspect in his speech and behaviour; the male relations of his wife on the other hand have complete licence to tease him as much as they will and to use every sort of obscene term; if he is provoked into answering back he is humiliated. A woman when she first comes to her husband's house is also delicately situated; but after the actual marriage feast there is no licenced teasing of the bride and, if she is living continually in the same house as her father-in-law, the strain, though it never quite wears off, is considerably lessened. Once he has brought his wife home a man still has to avoid the crudest sexual phrases in front of his parents-in-law; but it is considered a rather amusing and risky game to sail as near the wind as possible.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937).1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

593 184 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing [302 606] the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

426 always done. Inside the village the hire of a pair of bullocks is 8 lbs. of grain for one day or 12 lbs. for two.

ii

608 439 Before the beginning of this century when money was introduced and shops set up in the neighbourhood, Lepchas had to travel abroad to obtain cloth and thread, salt and metal goods. They used [386 to collect in the forest the red dye-wood called *vyim* (the Nepali 314] call it *majita*) and take that and whatever surplus crops they had up to the Tibetan border, where they would exchange it for salt and wool. Some of the salt they would then take to Darjeeling to exchange for thread and cloth. In order to be able to trade continuously and to receive hospitality and protection in foreign countries a formal relationship with religious sanctions was instituted. This relationship, and the two parties who entered into it, were called *ingʒong*,[1] which means literally 'like a younger brother'. For the formal establishment of an *ingʒong* relationship a pig must be killed and the intestines (*shafot*) offered to the Gods, in particular Komsi*thing*, the Lepcha supernatural who invented the relationship and who is, as it were, its patron saint; then a feast is held and the pig eaten, and the two contracting parties swear solemn oaths always to love and help one another, and never to do or think evil; after this an old and experienced man (not a lama, but it matters not who else) prepares the rite of *sakyou-faat*, the sacrifice of butter, which recurs in almost all Mun ceremonies; a cup is filled with strained *chi* and four dabs of butter are smeared round the sides; holding this the old man addresses the two who wish to become *ingʒong*, impressing on them the seriousness of the occasion, and the sanctions which would follow the breaking of their vows. Each of the *ingʒong* then drinks out of the cup and eats two of the dabs of butter. This solemnises the situation, and should either thereafter speak evil of or harm the other the god Komsi*thing* will send the devil Sankyor *moong* to punish him. It is said that Komsi*thing* first thought of the institution in the early days of creation when he was drunk; he then made *ingʒong* with all the foreigners who had goods which he did not possess: with the Nepali for their pigs, with the Plains Indians for their copper vessels, with the Bhutanese for their fine cloth, with the Tibetans for their rugs, and with the Sikkimese for their oxen.

[1] Lepchas tell me that the Tibetan term is *re-koo*, the Bhutanese *pre-koo*, the Nepali *mit*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Once the full ceremony has been performed the two *ingʒong* are regarded as being in truth sons of one father, and intermarriage between their descendants is forbidden as incestuous for nine generations. The relationship between one *ingʒong* and his *ingʒong*'s wife is a respectful one, and to mark his respect he will usually address her as 'mother'. It would be almost incestuous to sleep with your *ingʒong*'s wife, but a woman does not have to hide from her husband's *ingʒong* as is the case with the *mit* of Nepal.[2] As a general rule the *ingʒong* relationship is hereditary, the sons of *ingʒong* being themselves *ingʒong*; but there is no compulsion about this and if a son does not get on with his father's *ingʒong* and his sons he can set up new relationships. Even with hereditary *ingʒong* the full ceremonial must be performed in each generation.

Nowadays the Lepchas only set up the relationship with Sikkimese and Tibetans, for the exchange of crops and dye-wood for salt, carpets and metal vessels; they are, they say, no longer friendly with the Nepali and will have no relationships with them. *Ingʒong* is not an exclusive relationship. At the end of March a Sikkimese-Tibetan husband and wife from Lachen arrived in Lingthem with rugs which they wished to exchange for crops, dye-wood and cash. In the whole Talung valley they had eleven *ingʒong*, three of whom were in Lingthem; they spent one night in the house of each. When an *ingʒong* arrives on a visit efforts are made to feast him as well as possible; and when Lepchas go to visit their *ingʒong* they take with them presents of grain, and, if possible, meat. Most of the men of Lingthem have at least three Sikkimese or Tibetan *ingʒong*.

Properly speaking the term *ingʒong* is only applicable to the ceremonial trading-relationship set up between Lepchas and foreigners; but the word is very frequently used between Lepchas with the meaning 'my special friend.' It sometimes happens that two men will drink *chi* together ceremoniously to give some formality to their relationship; but they do not perform the full ceremony for that would entail the nine-generation marriage ban, and in the small community of Zongu, where the choice of wives is already limited, this would speedily produce an impossible state of affairs. It took me a considerable time to straighten out the different implications of the term *ingʒong*, for the word is in constant use,

[2] For this fact and for other details in this book concerning the Nepali I am indebted to information derived from Mr. C. J. Morris, either in conversation or from his book '*Gurkhas*' *Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Delhi 1936).

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Care of youngest child, born 1934.

After the mother's death Kurma's mother-in-law nursed the baby; although the child is in her fourth year she is still giving her a little milk. No medicines are needed to be given; the baby sucks and that produces the milk flow. His mother-in-law is forty-six years old but has not produced a child for several years. Kurma complains that his life is very hard as he has nobody to help him since his mother-in-law is feeble. His nephew is irresponsible and is constantly going away. 159x

Third wife.

Six months after the death of his second wife he met his third wife, who lives at Hi. He slept with her three times and she became pregnant and he did *asék* for her immediately after the memorial service for his second wife. A son was born in September 1936. Kurma says that two other men wanted to marry her but his wife preferred him. He hopes to be able to bring her home in the autumn of 1938.

iv

March 18th to May 20th.

JOURNAL OF KURMA'S ACTIONS AND OBITER DICTA

March 18th.

Recognised Kurma as a personality for the first time. He gave details of several exorcisms.

March 19th.

Kurma came to fetch us to conduct us to the *asék* of Chano's eldest son, at his house about a thousand feet down the valley. On the way down he pointed out a tree which was the home of the deut *moong*—fever devil. This devil has been seen and looks like a man covered with long hair. [778]

Kurma also talked about '*ingʔong*' and said he had two in the neighbourhood. He said that one reason for establishing '*ingʔong*' is because you love one another. Such a relationship is not established after a quarrel; should such an event occur a third party will give a big meal and try to reconcile the two quarrellers. [608]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the
● 608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis.
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natur-
[834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TEN

THE RHYTHM OF LEPCHA LIFE

i

Those travellers who mention the Lepchas in their accounts of their journeys in Sikkim and Tibet refer to them with startling unanimity as 'fairies' or 'elves' or 'woodland folk', according to the fantasy and self-consciousness of the different writers. The Europeans in British India who have had more prolonged contact with them stress as their chief qualities their mildness and truthfulness.

If one accepts Dr. Margaret Murray's account of the Fairies[1] as the original inhabitants of England who after the invasions of various conquering races lived in very hidden places and who were extremely timid in their contacts with the conquerors, the comparison of the Lepchas with the Fairies is extremely apt. The Lepchas who still retain a more or less integrated culture do live in relatively hidden and inaccessible places; they are remarkable climbers and walkers, they know the forest and its produce far better than any of their neighbours, and it is quite possible that they may appear in places where there is no visible path. They are pathologically shy of strangers; a foreigner passing through their villages, were he to notice the scattered and inconspicuous houses, might well think them deserted. The first few days in Lingthem we scarcely saw a soul; walking about the village we saw only shut and smokeless houses, with a very occasional dodderer or infant. The majority of the inhabitants had simply taken to the forest.

After a time this timidity wore off. I insisted that all goods bought locally should be paid for without bargaining, so that they should not fear requisitions; if too high a price was asked the goods were to be refused. I stated that I had got medicines and could cure certain sores and diseases, and after a couple of bold people

[1] *The God of the Witches*, by Dr. Margaret A. Murray. London Sampson Low n.d.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eleven o'clock he had a bad fit of shivering as from fever, though his pulse was low. He spent the earlier part of the morning talking about his past life and especially about religious ceremonials and his own experiences as Padem. He has three rosaries and can make diagnosis. He never had a teacher to learn how to do this but learnt it through the inspiration of Padem *rum* and also from observing his mother and other Mun. He gave an illustration of the way in which he would consult his rosary in the event of another person being ill. Whether consultation shall be made or not depends partly on personal inclination and partly on wealth. Kurma said he had not consulted for his sick son or for himself because of the expense. About midday he almost collapsed and I had to give him medicine. He says he has been this way for seven days and cannot sleep inside but only out of doors. He has completely lost appetite and when he shivers suffers from optical disturbances; grown-ups look no bigger than children and he sees red and white spots moving about over the ground and has a pain under his heart; a couple of days ago he was really bad and thought he was going to die. No Mun or lama has been called in; who is going to do it? His mother-in-law and nephew are 'strangers' and do not care about him.

He has recently spent seven days with his parents-in-law working for them; it was his first visit for three months. His small son was ill with a discharge of blood from his ears and sores all down one side. At present he is slightly recovered. No professional advice was called in. Kurma says one woman said of the child: 'His father is a foreigner from Lingthem, why bother about it?'

May 19th.

Kurma came up to-day for the first time since the 13th; he walked with a stick and still looked very seedy, sweating profusely. He said, however, he was better and brought a present of eggs and tomatoes for the medicine I had given him; I gave him a lot of quinine and a little aspirin; he took all the latter but only three tablets of the quinine because it was so bitter. He was in a highly nervous state and when there was a sharp noise (either a gun[20] or a bamboo snapping) he jumped several inches and exclaimed in a frightened voice: '*athu lukni lu-li-ko*'—words which I cannot translate and which Kurma said were meaningless; to turn the

[20] There are a couple of very old match-locks in the village which are occasionally used.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other 144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans 177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of 619 tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with 609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

resenting the intrusion of strangers. He told me that a few 114
years ago, during an epidemic of small-pox, he had sent a 609
vaccinator across to the valley in order to afford the people protection from the disease. But as soon as the man crossed the bridge the people fled from their houses and took to the forest, only returning when he became tired of waiting and went back to Gangtok. So far as I was concerned this story only added zest to the chase; and before leaving for England I arranged to return to Sikkim in the following spring.

On a previous occasion when I was in England, in 1934 I 114
think it was, I had met Geoffrey Gorer at the house of a mutual friend, and we had carried on an intermittent correspondence ever since. In the meantime he had spent some months in America, and while there had met Dr. Ruth Benedict, whose remarkable *Patterns of Culture* has influenced many of the younger and more open-minded ethnologists. As a result of working both with her and with Dr. Margaret Mead, the best-known exponent of her ideas, Geoffrey decided that he wanted to see for himself just exactly what field ethnology was all about, so I said he could come and help me, little thinking that he would accept. We were, now that I come to think of it, a most oddly assorted couple: Geoffrey, a self-acknowledged gourmet, and never really happy when too long away from the centre of things; and I, who can hardly tell the difference between caviare and tinned salmon, and to whom civilisation (so called) is a thing to be escaped from at all costs for as long and as often as possible. Also, according to Geoffrey, I have strong masochistic tendencies; and since I am passionately devoted to mountains and mountaineering a well-developed "death wish"; but in his view nearly all violent exercise is merely a method of punishing oneself. Before taking to ethnology I had been for nearly twenty years in the regular army; but as for this it was, in Geoffrey's words, "only occasionally apparent." Actually, all this boils down to the fact that he belongs to that post-war generation to whom (quite rightly) freedom of every sort is all, whereas I grew up in an earlier

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

HIMALAYAN HOTCH-POTCH: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SIKKIM

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepchà inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most of the people of India who trace descent from the father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

* *Social Organisation.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

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Consequently the recognised habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter—so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

 778

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 614
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who 823
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed [751
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which 824]
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

593 184 community of Gangtok, was that parent and child, brother and sister, would joke and act without the least restraint in one another's presence. In fact the Gangtok Lepchas dubbed their brothers of Zongu shameless and uncivilised. Obscene remarks, gestures and actions are never directed towards people nearly related; but the presence of such people is no restraint. Adult brothers and sisters should not, and on the whole do not, touch one another except in cases of actual necessity, such as helping a person at work or if they are ill. This prohibition does not extend to dressing [302 606] the hair, which can be performed by anybody for anybody else, with the exception of a son- or daughter-in-law and parent-in-law of the opposite sex.

ii

614 Every Lepcha belongs to a patrilineal clan or *ptso*, which is believed to have originated from some supernatural or legendary ancestor. Nowadays the chief function of the *ptso* is the regulation of marriage and the prevention of incest; it is, to all intents and purposes, an exogamic unit. In theory people of the same *ptso* are allowed to marry if they are separated by nine generations from a common ancestor, and to indicate that a person of the same *ptso* is very far removed a Lepcha will always say 'we can marry'; but in point of fact I did not come upon nor hear of a single instance of two people of the same *ptso* marrying. It was generally stated that though such a marriage was permissive, people would feel shame in it.

It is allowable to marry back into a mother's *ptso* after four generations; but so near a connection is considered somewhat shameless. Datoop's father, the first Dorjé Lapoon, took as his second wife a woman he called 'aunt' (*a-nyou*); his grandmother was a sister of her mother. This marriage was considered quite shameless, and even nearly sixty years later was a subject for embarrassment; but it demanded no sanctions against it, such as would have been invoked if the connection had been on the father's side.

It seems to me possible that in former times the *ptso* represented a geographical unit; in the very small villages there is a tendency for all, or at any rate the majority, of the men to be members of the same *ptso*. But nowadays this has broken down (if indeed it was ever institutionalised) completely; in Lingthem there are male representatives of twelve *ptso*. Of these the most populous

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and powerful is the Jamyong *ptso* to which Chala Mandal belongs. Eleven of the thirty-two households belong to this *ptso* representing in all sixty-two individuals, or nearly a third of the population of the village (176); but from this number must be subtracted the twenty-one married women from other *ptso*; I have not reckoned the daughters who have married into other *ptso*. Zumchyung *ptso*, to which Tafoor and his family belong, is the next most populous; it represents five households and thirty-one people, less the ten married women. At the other end of the scale are the Demik and Lubdong Rabji *ptso*, with only a single representative of each—Katel and Pargeut—in the neighbourhood. As far as I can tell from questioning visitors to Lingthem, the situation is similar in the other bigger villages; one or two large and numerous *ptso*, of which the Mandal is nearly always a member, and several other smaller ones.[2]

There is a slight advantage in belonging to a numerous *ptso* because you have more people you can call 'brothers' on whose help you can count automatically; but it is not an overwhelming advantage, on account of the Lepcha habits of co-operation, and some of the richest and most successful people of Lingthem were members of small *ptso*. In the choice of a son- or daughter-in-law the size of the *ptso* is sometimes taken into consideration; it is better for a child-in-law to come from a numerous *ptso*, for then there will be greater possibility of obtaining a second spouse, in the event of the first one's sterility or death. A stranger such as Tempa who marries into a populous *ptso* (his wife's father was Jamyong *ptso*) has the same advantages as if he were himself a member of it and his wife's relations behave to him exactly as if they were his own.

Each *ptso* is under the guardianship of certain supernaturals, who are worshipped by all the male members of the *ptso*; every third year all the men of one locality gather together and make a sacrifice of an ox and certain jewels and valuables (these latter are only symbolically offered and are subsequently retaken into use) followed by a feast; these feasts are held in rotation in the houses of the members of the *ptso* who live in the neighbourhood. This sacrifice is entirely under the direction of the Mun, with no admixture of lamaism at all, and a few of the more pious lamas refuse to participate in them, claiming that the lamas have in Chukyoong *rum* a 'guild' supernatural more powerful and more worthy of worship than the

[2] The distribution of *ptso* in Lingthem is tabulated in Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 776 gods of the *ptso*; but the greater number of lamas feel no metaphysical qualms and bear their full share in this Mun ceremony. The *ptso* supernaturals are always invoked by the Mun when they perform a ceremony for the benefit of a particular individual. In the Mun theogony all the *ptso* supernaturals are friendly and there is no rivalry between the groups; it is thought that the more populous the *ptso* the stronger the guardian supernaturals.

The *ptso* supernaturals descend, as it were, from father to son; women have other different supernaturals which descend from mother to daughter; with the consequence that brothers and sisters have different guardian supernaturals, although all children are counted as members of their father's *ptso*. (An exception must be [848] made in the case of unacknowledged bastards, who are considered to be members of the *ptso* of their mother's father.) These women's supernaturals are invoked, along with numberless others, at the Mun ceremonies after sowing and harvesting, and special sacrifices are made in their intention in the case of illness. Special sacrifices are also made to them at the time of the marriage feast, and the questioning of the bride about her special supernaturals is one of the most formalised incidents in the marriage ceremonies. 776 There are certain other supernaturals which are common to all women; these include Ami *rum*, the god of riches, and Katong Fi who visits women in their dreams and copulates with them at the time of their menses; this dream-copulation is meant to continue throughout life, and should a month pass without this dream it means that the woman is shortly going to die. Parallel to these exclusively female supernaturals are Pong *rum*, and his wife Shing *rum*, the patrons of hunting, who are worshipped exclusively by men. There are also other supernaturals who are as it were patrons of each sex respectively, and yet others who belong to the family, as distinct from the *ptso*. Among the countless supernaturals with which the world is filled these personal and private ones have no great significance; along with numberless others—the enumeration of gods in a Mun sacrifice may take two or three hours—they are prayed to for the blessings of long life, many children, and prosperity, but their power is not considered to be great.

614 Except as an exogamic classification the *ptso* is now functionless. Although members of the different *ptso* are scattered, not only throughout Zongu, but wherever Lepchas live, the triennial unions only gather those members who live near one another; to the best of my knowledge there has never been, nor has there ever

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

been a reason for, a general gathering of all the members of the *ptso*. A traveller among strange people has no claim on the hospitality of unknown members of his *ptso*, though it would still be shameful for two members of the same *ptso* to have sexual connection. More than anything else, the *ptso* is a device for the prevention of incest. 614

iii

Incest for the Lepchas is horrifying; they do not call it a sin but *nam-toak*, an act which produces a year of disaster for the community. Sin is a lamaist conception and is on the whole only applied to acts like the killing of animals; *nam-toak* is the phrase used for personal acts which are felt to be strongly anti-social. Any sexual connection with blood relations for nine generations on the father's side and four on the mother's is considered incestuous; but children under the age of puberty, or, as the Lepchas say 'who are not old enough to know shame', are not considered capable of committing incest and no watch is kept on children's play. Besides blood relations sexual connection with the following relations-by-marriage is considered as incestuous: for a man to sleep with any of the women he calls 'mother-in-law' or 'daughter-in-law' (that is his wife's mother, his wife's elder sister, the wife of his wife's elder brother, and his sons' wives, the wives of his *younger* brothers, and the wives of his brothers' and sisters' sons); for a woman, to sleep with any of the men she calls 'father-in-law' or 'son-in-law' (that is her husband's father, her husband's *elder* brothers, the husband of her husband's elder sister, and her daughter's husbands, the husbands of her younger sisters, and the husbands of her brothers' and sisters' daughters). Such relationships, besides causing a year of disaster to the community, would call down a devil on to the guilty couple who would cover them with sores. Should children result from such a union they would be allowed to live, but they would either be of an evil mind or idiots, and would be short-lived. 835

No cases of mother-son or father-daughter incest are known of; nor does the situation occur in any mythological story. Brother-sister incest on the other hand is a motive in a great deal of Mun mythology, inevitably so, for the world and all that therein is are the children of Itpomu the Creative Mother. The origin of devils and noxious animals arises from the incest of her first two 'human' children (if I can so express it) Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*. I only heard of one case of true brother-sister incest, and that 835 773 835

J: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

837 as several Lepchas said when the point was raised 'Who can force a grown woman against her will?' More distantly related women, such as 'aunts', may put up a certain amount of semi-playful resistance, but no rancour is felt if it is overborne.

It is considered to be an act of excessively bad taste to copulate with a heritable wife in her husband's presence, or in such situations that there is a possibility of his witnessing it. These legalised adulteries usually take place during the husband's temporary absence, or else outside the house, in the forests or fields or field-houses; these outdoor encounters are usually very brief, and have a slightly romantic flavour. Copulation inside the house has the advantage of giving longer time, but it also exposes the couple to questionable remarks and a good deal of teasing.

836 One of the results of this situation is that almost all boys and young men get their first real sexual experience and training from 864 an older married woman. Elder brothers usually explicitly instruct their younger brothers in their rights. In Lepcha theory a woman should never make direct sexual advances—the common Lepcha words for sexual activity are, like the English ones, transitive and one-directioned—but in point of fact I found that in nearly every case men had had their first real sexual experience with the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle' at the woman's direct invitation and solicitation. This is considered altogether desirable; although sexual activity is thought to be as natural and as necessary as eating, it is necessary that boys should be taught to do it properly. Thus Chudo said one day 'If I caught Chimpet (the son of his elder brother Tafoor) sleeping with my wife I shouldn't be cross at all; on the contrary I should be very pleased, for she would be teaching him how to do it properly and I would know that he was in the hands of a good teacher! On the other hand, if I caught a married man, who had a right to sleep with my wife, doing so I should reproach them for their lack of shame in doing in my presence what might better be done in my absence; if I was really angry I should tell other people about it, so that everybody might know how shameless the man had been.'

614 I have already suggested that the *ptso* was possibly earlier a 836 geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible that these permissive regulations were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the *ptso* as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced
835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is
[538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem-
[195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual
[831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand
[833] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are
831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

* * * * *

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619 *pu-tso*. No one can say how many clans there are, for this grouping seems to be a purely local one. In the Kalimpong district I recorded the names of over forty different clans, but in Lingtem there were but fourteen, all of them different from those I had already collected. There does not appear ever to have been any sort of tribal organisation, nor even a tribal leader; and while I use the word clan to denote these collections of people, it would be better to regard them as merely belonging to one large family, which is in fact what
614 they are. We shall probably never know what functions the clan formerly possessed, but its sole use nowadays is in regulating marriage, it being impossible for a man to marry a girl of the same *pu-tso* as his own. Ethnologists call this custom exogamy: but Lepcha exogamy is of a special kind, for it does permit a man to marry a relative of his father provided the relationship is removed by five (but some say seven) generations. Such a marriage is of course only possible with a person descended through the father's sister, since she, having married into another clan, belongs to a different *pu-tso*. In the case of a marriage between the descendants of two sisters a separation of only three generations is demanded. In actual practice all this means is that any two related people, provided they do not both belong to the same clan, may marry provided the relationship between them is sufficiently distant as to have been forgotten for all practical purposes.

Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 614 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [65]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the
●614 tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

114 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly pub-
614 lications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came
539 into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

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ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

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4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-puteo-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namteeemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil.[1] While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 184

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Na zong nyo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad hbum beags*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad hbum beags* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Taea Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *beTsa barung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773

[1 [i.e.,] during the funeral rites. —Analyst]

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616,
618, 621

ALl Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DEVIANTS AND DEFECTIVES

i

128 Except when I have used individual illustrations the four chapters of Book Two have been written about an abstraction called
157 'the average Lepcha'. Of course such an abstraction has no more real existence than 'the average man' or 'the man in the street' dear to European and American journalists; he is a compromise between the ideal personality set up for the Lepchas by themselves and the observable behaviour of the majority of the Lepchas in Lingthém. It is the Lepcha stereotype who has been described.

157 The Lepcha stereotype is unaggressive, sociable, hard-working, constantly good-humoured, greatly interested in direct consumption (eating, drinking and copulation), fundamentally optimistic. The relationship of the Lepcha stereotype with his fellows is based rationally on mutual benefits and obligations; very little stress is placed on personal affection and practically no interest is taken in, and no allowance made for, individual character or temperament. The Lepcha insists very firmly on the independence of the adult individual and the family group; no attempt is made to dominate or exploit others, and any attempt by others to dominate or exploit is resisted as actively as the rules of the culture permit. The Lepcha identifies himself strongly with his family group and with his immediate community—the village; the identification with the
[619] tribe as a whole is much less strong, and one of the Lepchas' chief social weaknesses is that, except in the case of serious crime, the Mandal and inhabitants of one village have little influence over the inhabitants of any other village under a different Mandal. The Lepcha stereotype calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility and almost unquestioning confidence from younger people in their elders.

128 Although this stereotype does not, I think, correspond exactly to the behaviour or attitudes of any one person, it is not for that

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately. It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley. Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other
144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans
177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of
619 tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with
609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people, who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

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Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619● important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

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List of the Inhabitants of Lingthem

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NOTE: This is a list of the inhabitants of Lingthem mentioned in the text and is made to avoid the constant repetition of age, sex, social position and chief relationships in the body of the text. This list is not exhaustive, and only the chief operative relationships are named; further relationships can, if desired, be discovered by inspection of Appendix I, Table 4. Those people most often mentioned in the text have their names printed in capitals. The following social classifications, which are fully elucidated in the text, are used: Muktair, Mandal, *youni*, *gyapôn* are village officials (see Chapter Five); lama and nun are priests of the lamaist religion (see Chapter Seven); *Mun*, *padem*, *Nandjôma* are priests of the old Lepcha religion (see Chapter Eight).

The number immediately after the name is the age in years of the person in 1937. Women are designated either by the prefix 'Mrs.' when they are listed immediately under their husband, or by feminine kinship terms. The following abbreviations have been used:

Kinship term in quotes—e.g. 'grandfather'—signifies that the relationship is classificatory and operative.

d.r. signifies 'distantly related to' in those cases where a distant relationship is socially operative.

Ph. pl. followed by a number signifies that there is a photograph of the person mentioned on the plate of that number. Some people appear in several photographs, but only one is given.

Adér, 71. 'Grandfather' of Chano, Chinya, Aga (Ph. pl. 25a).
Aga, 37. Son of Hlatam, 'brother' of Chano, Chinya.
Mrs. Aga I, 37. Mother of three children.
Mrs. Aga II, 43. Sterile widow, should be wife of Zumba.
Agyung, 29. Adopted son of Serving. Married with one son.
Aplung, 29. Brother of Rigya and Gyatso. Son of Ashyok *youni*.
Mrs. Aplung, 35. Formerly stepmother of Tobgé.
Ashyok *youni*, 50. Father of Rigya, Gyatso, Aplung (Ph. pl. 11e).
Atyook, 16. Adopted son of Tingkep *youni*, real son of Ongden, q.v. (Ph. pl. 30).

Balada, 23, carpenter. Son of Ongden, brother of Chanko, Atyook, Kanchok.

CHALA MANDAL, 59. Head of village (Ph. pl. 7).
Mrs. Mandal I, 28, num. Sterile. d.r. Chélé's wife, Dadool, Kanden (Ph. pl. 19).

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Mrs. Mandal II, 36. Has one daughter, formerly wife of Katel's son (Ph. pl. 19).

CHANO, 31, lama. Widower, married to elder brother's wife; 'father' of Mikmar, Pursang; 'brother' of Aga, Chinya (Ph. pl. 31a).

Mrs. Chano, 32, possessed by Mun (Ph. pl. 19b).

Chanko, 29, lama. Eldest son Ongden, brother of Atyook, Kanchok. Married.

CHÉLÉ, 10. Grandson of Kahlyeu. Inherited uncle's wife (Ph. pl. 9a).

Chelim, 46. 'Brother' of Ongden; adopted child. Has adopted Kanchok as his son.

CHIMPET, 14. Eldest son of Tafoor, q.v. (Ph. pl. 12b) training as lama.

Chinya, 37. 'Brother' of Aga, Chano (Ph. pl. 24b).

Mrs. Chinya, 41. Sterile.

CHUDO, 29, lama. Brother of Tafoor. Has three children, eldest boy training as lama (Ph. pl. 12a); Chudo (Ph. pl. 22a).

Mrs. Chudo, 29.

Lharibu (painter), Chujen of Panung (next village), lama. Father-in-law of Tafoor (Ph. pl. 11d).

Dadool, 23. Son of Také, brother of Kanden. Carrying on an intrigue with Mrs. Tobgé (Ph. pl. 26a).

Mrs. Dadool, 23.

DATOOP, 56, lama. Son of first Dorjé Lapoon, father of Pembu, Pichi, Kolok Tyong. d.r. Tafoor, Chudo, Pargeut (Ph. pl. 29).

MRS. DATOOP, 49, nun. d.r. Kurma (Ph. pl. 28b).

First Dorjé Lapoon, 82, lama. Father of Datoop, q.v.

SECOND DORJÉ LAPOON, 69, lama. 'Father' of Tafoor, Chudo, Recently married Pumri (Ph. pl. 11c).

Dunbi, 62. 'Brother' of Muktair, Tafoor's father. Father of Prumtu, Pankek.

MRS. DUNBI (Tafoormu), 54. Formerly married to Muktair. Mother of Tafoor, Chudo, Prumtu, Pankek.

GONGYOP, 47, *Mun*. Brother of Thyak Thimbu, paternal uncle Sangkyar, Satéo (Ph. pl. 14).

Mrs. Gongyop, 41 (Ph. pl. 19b).

Gongyop's son, 18. Betrothed (Ph. pl. 24b).

Gyatso, carpenter, 20. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung Nariya.

HLATAM, 67, nun. The 'poisoner,' mother of Aga.

Itup, 31. Son of Takneum *youmi*. Married.

JIROONG, 41, lama. Uncle of Tobgé. d.r. Pongring (Ph. pl. 30).

MRS. JIROONG, 28. Sister of Tempa (Ph. pl. 30).

KAHLYEU, 77. Grandfather of Chélé (Ph. pl. 15b).

Kaji, 59. Old man who sees devils.

Mrs. Kaji, 37, *Mun*. Sister of Jiroong, aunt of Tobgé.

Kanchok, 17. Adopted son of Chelim, son of Ongden (q.v.).

KANDEN, 25, defective. Son of Také, brother of Dadool (Ph. pl. 26b).

KATEL, 55, *Mun*. (Ph. pl. 16).

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Mrs. Katel I, 56. Mother of three children. d.r. Chala Mandal.
Mrs. Katel II, 18.
Kolok Tyong, 15. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29).
KONDÉ, 16. Daughter of Pargeut. d.r. Datoop, Tafoor (Ph. pl. 29).
KURMA, *gyapön, padem*, 37. d.r. Mrs. Datoop (Ph. pl. 27).
Kutt'r, 18, lama. Son of Lumba (Ph. pl. 13b).

Lumba *chithembu*, 51, lama. Father of Kutt'r (Ph. pl. 11a).
Mrs. Lumba I, 47, *Mun*. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Tempa.
Mrs. Lumba II, 38. d.r. Mrs. Lumba I, q.v.

Mikmar, 13. Son of Chano, brother of Pursang; betrothed, studying to be a lama (Ph. pl. 24).
MUKTAIR. Dead father of Tafoor, Chudo; first husband of Mrs. Dunbi.

Nahyeun, 41. Bastard son of Dunbi.
Nandjému, 66. Elder grandmother of Patek.
NARIYA, 30. Adoptive brother of Rigya, son of elder brother of Ashyok *youmi*.
Mrs. Nariya, 14.

Ongden, 52, lama. Father of Chanko, Bahada, Kanchok, Atyook; brother of Tinkep; 'brother' of Chelim (Ph. pl. 25a).
Mrs. Ongden, 22. Widow, very recently married to Ongden.

Pankek, 6. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi (Ph. pl. 21a).
Pargeut, 44. Father of Kondé, Tangvoong, old mother a nun, d.r. Datoop, Tafoor.
Mrs. Pargeut, 38.
PATEK, 17. Head of household of six, including two grandmothers, a *Nandjému* and a *Mun*; brother of Ribu (Ph. pl. 9b).
PEMBU, 29, lama. Son of Datoop, q.v. (Ph. pl. 29), father of Dugoo.
Mrs. Pembu, 23. (Ph. pl. 29).
Pichi, 23. Son of Datoop, brother of Pembu, carpenter (Ph. pl. 28a).
Pongring, 83, lama. Monastery custodian. d.r. Jiroong (Ph. pl. 9b).
PRUMTU, 15. Daughter of Dunbi and Mrs. Dunbi, lives with half-brothers Tafoor and Chudo.
PUMRI, 74, *Mun*. Mother of Mrs. Lumba I, Mrs. Tempa. Recently married second Dorjé Lapoon, being widow of his "uncle" (Ph. pl. 15b).
Pursang, 11. 'Son' of Chano, brother of Mikmar.

Ribu, 12. Brother of Patek, q.v.
RIGYA, 23. 'Brother' of Nariya, whose parents adopted him. Son of Ashyok *youmi*, brother of Aplung, Gyatso (Ph. pl. 26a).
Mrs. Rigya, 26.

Samblyou, 60. Sister of Mrs. Takal and Mrs. Gongyop, a promiscuous woman at present living with Zumba.
SANGKYAR, 36, a cretinous defective. Brother of Satéo, nephew of Gongyop and Thyak Thimbu, with latter of whom he lives.
Satéo, 27, a cripple. Brother of Sangkyar, q.v. lives with Chala Mandal (Ph. pl. 17b).

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Seryop Katoo, 17. Bastard son of Itup, q.v., born when his father was only 13.

SERVING, 96. Oldest man of Lingthem, descendant of former village heads. Adopted Agyung, grandson of elder brother (Ph. pl. 8a).

Songpo *youni*, 67. d.r. Také, Kanden, Dadool.

Mrs. Songpo, 66, nun.

TAFOOR, 35, lama. Father of Chimpet and three daughters, brother of Chudo, 'son' of second Dorjé Lapoon, 'nephew' of Dunbi, 'brother' of Datoop (Ph. pl. 23).

MRS. TAFOOR, 31, nun. Daughter of Lharibu Chujen (Ph.pl. 22b).

Takal. 57, lama.

Mrs. Takal, 58, nun. Sister of Samblyou and Mrs. Gongyop, promiscuous.

Takneum *youni*, 60. Adopted as a boy by his father's sister, father of Itup. Mother living, 84, nun (Ph. pl. 8b).

Takshyom, 19. Nephew of Kurma.

Tangvoong, 12. Daughter of Pargeut, sister of Kondé.

TEMPA, 44. Stranger to Zongu, married Pumri's daughter (Ph. pl. 7b).

Mrs. Tempa, 44. Daughter of Pumri, sister of Mrs. Lumba I. Three daughters surviving.

Thyak Thimbu, 49, *Mun*. Brother of Gongyop, uncle of Satéo and Sangkyar. Has two wives.

Tingkep *gyapōn*, 35. Brother of Ongden, q.v. Adopted Ongden's son, Atyook. His wife bore a child 1934.

TOBGÉ, 22. Son of elder brother of Jiroong with whom he lives (Ph. pl. 6a).

Mrs. Tobgé, 25. d.r. Mrs. Jiroong and Tempa.

Zumba, 48. Living with Samblyou. d.r. Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu.

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361 villages on the Zongu bank. Excluding the Talung monastery, which is a couple of days' journey from most of the villages, and 184 which, save for a guardian, is empty except during certain festivals, there are no lamaist monasteries and very few lamas on this bank. [829] The inhabitants of this portion are considered by the people of Zongu to be uncivilised and rude, keeping much more to the habits of their forefathers. For a great deal of their food they rely on hunting and forest produce; their religion is still almost entirely that of the Mun, the lamaist propaganda having reached them very slightly. Owing to the excessively precipitous nature of the ground I never went over to this side of the river; on a few occasions however I saw some of the inhabitants.

361 There are in Zongu itself twenty-two settlements with distinctive names, and across the river eight more; some of these 621 named settlements only consist of two or three houses and they are administratively and emotionally divided into twelve districts. Although it is convenient to speak of villages these settlements have no sort of geographical unity; the houses are either isolated in the fields and forests, or gathered in small groups of three or four; I never saw more than four houses which were close neighbours. Except for the three villages—Lingthem, Gyatong and Tangvoong—which possess a monastery, there is no sort of focal centre to the village, and it would be possible for a casual traveller to pass through quite a large village without being aware of its existence. Lingthem, where I lived, consisted of 33 houses; it is the biggest village on the Talung side of Zongu, and the second biggest in the reserve; the biggest of all is Gyatong, which, with its neighbour Hi, contains 60 houses. From the spur of one hill in Lingthem it is possible to see eight houses at once; I should reckon that there were quite three miles and three thousand feet between the lowest house to the east and the highest house to the west in the village.

621 When three or four houses are grouped together they are usually given a distinctive name. This grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours; people living in adjoining houses may be closely related, or they may be complete strangers, and full brothers may live separated by the full distance of the village.[2] The metaphysical desiderata, described later in this chapter, for the choice of a house site and

[2] For the plan of the houses of Lingthem and their inhabitants, see Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hazards of inheritance account sufficiently for the meaningless grouping of neighbours.

The names of the villages on either side of the river Talung are accounted for by the following oft-repeated etymological myth:

'On any clear day there is visible from Lingthem a large gendarme of black rock rising from the mountain Siniolchi, or, as it is called in Lepcha, Sanyol-koong. On that gendarme there lived once upon a time a devil called Lassoo-fo *moong* (the Lassoo bird devil). This devil was a man-eater; he used to capture people all through the neighbourhood and take them away to Tibet where he would kill and eat them. Therefore the Gods Kansi *thing* (lord), Kom-yo *thing* and Saktsum *thing* consulted together as to how they could kill this demon. They tried to find a man who was capable, but they could not do so. They then went to the caterpillar *pi-sik-bu* who gnaws trees so that they become hollow and fall down, and they told him to go and cut down the tree in that place.[3] The caterpillar agreed and hollowed the tree so that it fell down, after which the demon had no place to live and went wandering about. Then the three gods sent for Rum-nam (a mythological hero) to kill the demon, and wherever the demon went Rum-nam followed.

'The demon went down the Talung valley and came to Sakyong (so called because Tag-kyong-ka was killed there), Pantoong, Thong-to, Lavén, Tangvoong, Lungdeum (where he killed children), A-dong, Ling-them (*tem-la tem-la taa*: he ate each in turn): the village opposite is called Liklyang, the place of crying, because people cried out from there.[4] Rum-nam chased him and eventually overtook him at Lasso-tsong-nyong, in the Teesta valley to the west, and there killed him and scattered his flesh over the land. From this scattered flesh arose leeches and mosquitoes, and the small predatory bird *kar-hu-fo*. His bones turned into stone, and at the place where he was slain there is a huge stone which can be seen to this day.'

Except for questions of the size of the population and the fertility of the land and some minor details of internal administration,

[3] There is a verbal confusion here between the various meanings of the word *koong*—(1) mountain peak, and (2) tree, worked wood, and finally house-pillar. There are obviously no trees on the gendarme which is well above the snow level. However I heard this story repeated several times in identical terms.

[4] All the other village names have etymological derivations from the same legend, but it seems unnecessary to give them all.

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621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far 184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest 539 when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery
794 precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were
[868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

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● 621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

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APPENDIX I

(a) VITAL STATISTICS OF LINGTHEM

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IN Lingthem it was—very exceptionally for a primitive community—possible to get the exact age of every member of the community. This was possible because it is essential for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year cycle they were born in for future horoscopes and divinations. They know also how many cycles they have completed because, after the completion of the third or fourth cycle—that is to say after the age of thirty-six or forty-eight—it is necessary to make a prophetic consultation with the lamas at the beginning of each new cycle—i.e. at the age of forty-eight, sixty, seventy-two, etc.—and all remember how many consultations they have made. Only in the case of two old widowed women am I in any doubt as to the accuracy of the data. This census was taken in April 1937.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION BY SEX IN TEN-YEAR GROUPS

Age	*Males*	*Females*
90–81	3	1
80–71	3	4
70–61	5	5
60–51	10	6
50–41	13	13
40–31	8	11
30–21	19	16
20–11	18	11
10– 1	10	20

TOTAL POPULATION	176
MALES	89
FEMALES	87

Median age for the population	28—year 1909
Median age for males	29—year 1908
Median age for females	28—year 1909

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TABLE I

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

Year of birth	*Males*	*Females*	*Year of birth*	*Males*	*Females*
1847	1	–	1892	–	1
1848	–	–	1893	2	1
1849	–	–	1894	–	1
1850	–	–	1895	–	–
1851	–	–	1896	3	3
1852	1	1	1897	–	1
1853	–	–	1898	–	–
1854	–	–	1899	–	2
1855	1	–	1900	3	2
1856	–	–	1901	1	1
1857	1	–	1902	2	1
1858	–	1	1903	–	–
1859	–	–	1904	–	–
1860	1	–	1905	–	1
1861	–	–	1906	2	3
1862	–	–	1907	1	–
1863	–	1	1908	5	1
1864	–	1	1909	–	5
1865	–	–	1910	4	–
1866	1	1	1911	–	3
1867	–	–	1912	3	4
1868	1	–	1913	–	–
1869	–	–	1914	5	2
1870	1	1	1915	1	1
1871	1	1	1916	–	–
1872	–	–	1917	1	–
1873	–	1	1918	1	1
1874	1	–	1919	4	1
1875	1	2	1920	1	1
1876	–	–	1921	2	1
1877	1	2	1922	2	2
1878	3	–	1923	2	1
1879	–	–	1924	1	–
1880	1	–	1925	1	2
1881	1	1	1926	3	2
1882	1	–	1927	1	–
1883	–	1	1928	2	2
1884	1	1	1929	–	–
1885	1	1	1930	–	6
1886	1	–	1931	–	–
1887	1	1	1932	–	–
1888	3	1	1933	2	5
1889	1	1	1934	4	2
1890	2	1	1935	1	4
1891	1	3	1936	–	1

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(*b*) PLAN OF THE VILLAGE OF LINGTHEM

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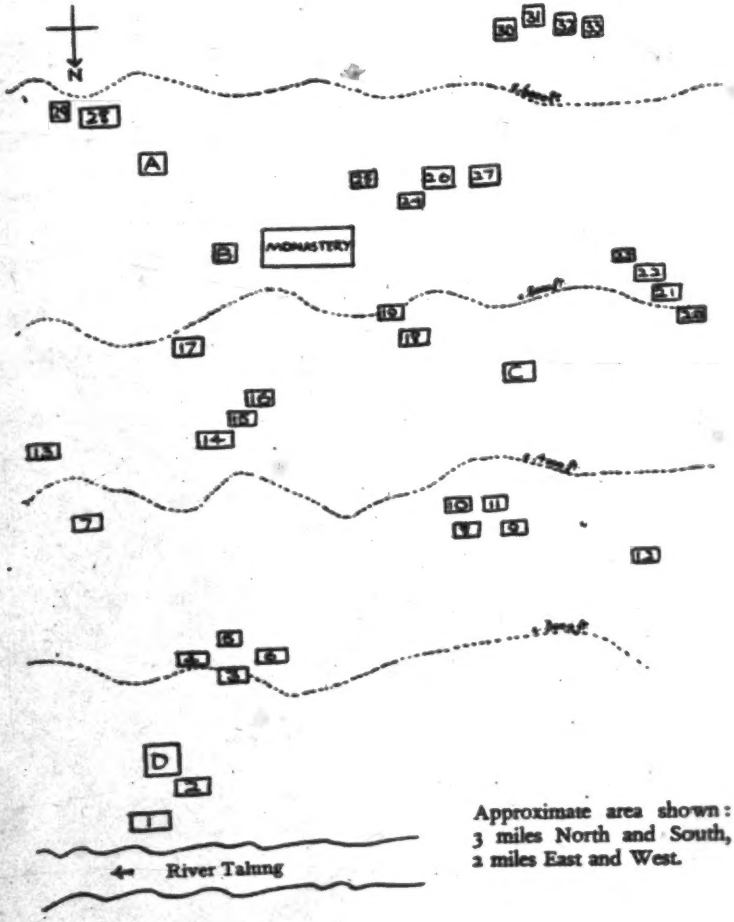
The accompanying plan shows schematically the distribution of houses in Lingthem. They are all situated on the northern slope of the mountain rising steeply from the River Talung. The numbers are for reference to the accompanying table of householders. B is the house of the monastery guardian. A, C and D are field-houses permanently inhabited by part of the household.



Approximate area shown: 3 miles North and South, 2 miles East and West.

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TABLE IV

LIST OF HOUSEHOLDERS

(arranged by PTSO (patrilineal clan) and showing composition of household)

House number on plan	*Householder*	*Members of household*			
		Adults		*Children*[1]	
		M	*F*	*M*	*F*
JAMYONG PTSO					
3	CHALA MANDAL	3	2	–	1
4	Chano	1	1	3	1
12	Asang	2	3	2	2
16	Chinya	2	1	–	–
18	Kahlyeu	1	1	1	–
23	Aga	1	3	1	2
27	Nariya	2	2	–	–
29	Ongden	3	2	2	3
30	Ashyok	3	2	–	–
31	Chelim	1	2	1	1
33	Tingkep	2	2	2	–
ZUMCHYONG PTSO					
9	Nahyeun	1	1	–	–
17	Tafoor	3	3	3	5
25	Kaji	2	2	–	–
28	Dunbi	1	1	–	1
32	Takneum	2	3	3	–
TAMSANG PTSO					
5	Thyak Thimbu	2	2	–	–
6	Gongyop	4	2	–	–
11	Zumba	2	2	–	–
PAKI PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
1	Kurma	2	1	–	1
22	Také	3	2	–	–
SAKMI PTSO					
10	Pembu	1	1	1	–
21	Datoop	2	1	1	–
A	First Dorjé Lapoon	2	–	–	–
ARAM PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
19	Tempa	1	2	–	2
20	Patek	2	4	1	–
B	Pongring	1	–	–	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House number on plan	Householder	Members of household: Adults M	Adults F	Children[1] M	Children[1] F
ARAM PANDJET PTSO (N.B. The relationship here is distant)					
7	Takal	1	1	–	–
26	Lumba	2	2	–	–
C	Lumba's elder wife	–	1	1	–
DEMIK PTSO					
13	Katel	1	2	1	1
KALONG KANDONG PTSO					
2	Songpo	1	1	–	–
D	Nakleup (son of Songpo)	1	1	–	–
LUBDONG RABJI PTSO					
8	Pargeut	1	2	1	4
TAKPO PTSO					
14	Tobgé (has left house to live with Jiroong)				
24	Jiroong	2	2	1	2
TSELTELIM PTSO					
15	Serving	2	1	1	–

[1] By children are here understood unmarried men under twenty.

592
621

[p. 462 is blank]

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Lepcha AK5

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

CHAPTER FIVE

LAW AND ORDER

i

Zongu, as part of the Maharajah of Sikkim's private estate, is 643
administered for him by one of the Kazi, or hereditary minis- 647
ters and landowners. It is at present under the Rhennock Kazi, who has succeeded the Mali Kazi. Except on very rare occasions the Kazi does not visit the reserve; the Mandals and Muktair pay relatively frequent visits to Gangtok to pay over the taxes to him and to consult him on any problems of internal administration.

Administratively Zongu is divided into twelve villages, each 636
with a Mandal[1] at its head. Until the beginning of this century
there were no intermediaries between the Mandals and the Kazi 622
in charge; but some thirty years ago, at the instance of the Maharani, the aunt of the present Maharajah, the office of Muktair[2] was instituted. The Muktair is superior to the Mandals; he can deal with misdemeanours carrying a fine of not more than Rs. 60, while the Mandals can only deal with fines of Rs. 30 or less; he has to supervise all tax-accounts, and visits each village twice yearly to inspect the fields and see that grain has not been planted in excess of the amount on which tax has been paid; he has also to make a
register of births and deaths. At first he was also responsible for 636
the collection of taxes, but Tafoor's father, when he held the office, made a muddle of this job, and the actual collection and payment of
the monies reverted to the Mandals. I was told that the Muktair [465]
receives as salary 4 per cent of the money collected and 4 annas on each house, but the sum seems to me excessive.

The history of this office of Muktair gives a good illustration of

[1] The term *Mandal* is not a Lepcha nor even a Sikkimese word. It is the common word for the head of the village throughout Northern India. It is however in universal use among the Lepchas, having completely displaced the Sikkimese-Tibetan *La-chen* and the Lepcha *Jem-mi*.

[2] The Sikkimese-Tibetan term is *Tong-yoop*.

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 [736] his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tamtoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

[431 177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PLATE 7

CHALA MANDAL, THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE

TEMPA, THE DEPOSED MUKTAIR

142
622
291
[636]

[Facing p. 128]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 584

622 538

With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[43] 177 manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between the two parties.

This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

I

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so
[538] foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater importance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture;
[183] for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with
781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapōn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

624 and Itup the son of Takneum *youmi*. There is also a *gyapōn* in Panung and one in Liklyang.

iii

[622] The objects of the four above-named offices are twofold; the regulation of intra-village affairs and the collection of taxes for the State. Within the village crime has to be prevented and possibly punished, quarrels stopped, and the poor and needy helped.

651 There is a fixed tax of Rs. 5 a year on each house, a small tax on certain grain seeds which are sown for crops and a sales tax on the cardamum fruit, which is regulated according to the price fetched and automatically deducted at selling.[5] The total tax payable by the fifty houses under Chala Mandal's jurisdiction is Rs. 3500, averaging Rs. 70[6] per household. The money is collected by the *gyapōn* and taken by the Mandal to Gangtok. Although the payment of the taxes is somewhat resented, especially by the older men, it does not seem to me to bear hardly on the Lepchas. Both money and the cash-producing crop of cardamum were introduced together at the beginning of this century—formerly taxes were paid in kind—and everybody grows more than sufficient cardamum to pay their taxes. There are nevertheless some arrears of taxes in Lingthem; indeed a couple of households are seven years in arrear, and that not through poverty but through fecklessness. So feckless are they that the Mandal has threatened that if they do not pay by the next year he will refuse to be responsible for them, in which case they will be summoned to the chief Court in Gangtok. Generally

[5] The actual taxes on seed are as follows:—

Wet rice	Rs. –/8	on 8 lbs.
Millet and maize	Rs. –/12	on 8 lbs.
Dry rice	Rs. 1/–	on 32 lbs.

Other crops are not taxed. The tax on cardamum is graduated according to the selling price per maund of 80 lbs.

If the maund fetches	Rs. 10/–	the tax is	Rs. –/14
" " "	Rs. 20/–	"	Rs. 1/8
" " "	Rs. 40/–	"	Rs. 2/8.

This tax has recently been reduced. Formerly it was at Rs. 2/8 at under Rs. 20, and Rs. 5/– over that sum. The 1936 price of cardamum was Rs. 12/– a maund. There is also a small tax, not very efficiently collected, on animals pastured in, or produce gathered from the forest.

[6] About £5 7 0 or 26 dollars.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as
[622] before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 2

Himalayan Hotch-potch: an Anthology of Sikkim

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which 614
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [651]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 692 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his Absence on state business.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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159

Chala Mandal, the Headman of Lingtem.

[411
622]

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being
illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

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159 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort,
● 622 and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This I did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared into the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

* * * * *

602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show, by means of charts, the connection between the various people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either by blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general account such as this, however, these details would not make for easy reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them for publication in some appropriate scientific journal.

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1] are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rāam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Ta-shi Tak-bo Rāam* [2] or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3] or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]. Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]. Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-e*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6] are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7] and those
[753] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-s'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8] where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9], though the Lepchas never seem to have
●[622] developed any organized coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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[1]) loc. cit. 9.

192 [2]) *Ta-shi* is from *Ta* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tiak* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-ting*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Ta-shi*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nang-lyen-no* and *Ka-t'ung-ñ*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sāā-fok*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sākong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *De-lok* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

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622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so
[538] foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater import-
[183] ance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture; for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with
781 which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

● 624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapōn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

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entail directly or indirectly the slaughter of animals. In some villages the two offices are combined in a single holder, but in Lingthem they are kept quite distinct. The office of *youmi* is undoubtedly the older, as the linguistic evidence shows; for *youmi* is a Lepcha word and *gyapōn* Sikkimese-Tibetan; nor is there a Lepcha equivalent, the only other term used being the general north-Indian *karbari*. I have no evidence as to the time when the specific work of *gyapōn* was distinguished; in Lingthem the office has existed at least three generations.

624

In Lingthem the *youmi* are selected from those who have already held the office of *gyapōn*; they consist of old and experienced men who assist the Mandal with their advice and efforts in his various works; they also with the *gyapōn* try to compose quarrels or minor misdemeanours without bringing them to the official notice of the Mandal. *Youmi* are selected by the Mandal in consultation with all the responsible householders; as one *youmi* gets too old, or wishes to give up work, or dies, the Mandal nominates another from the ex-*gyapōn* to replace him. In Lingthem itself there are three *youmi*; Takneum, Songpo and Ashyok. There is also a separate *youmi* in Panung and a fifth at Liklyang across the river. The *youmi* have no privileges of any sort beyond such prestige as the title gives, but they also have comparatively little work.

The chief work on the administrative side of the village falls on the *gyapōn*. Each householder in turn has to hold the office for three years; a sort of rota is established, and people know for some time beforehand when their turn of office falls due. The work is distinctly arduous; it entails the actual collection of the taxes, the summoning of all citizens for ceremonies or when collective work for a village (for example bridge- or road-repairing, or carrying loads) is required, the collection of grain from each house for communal ceremonies and the prevention of crime and quarrelling. A great deal of the *gyapōn's* time is taken up in communal business, and consequently their own work and cultivation may have to be somewhat neglected; except for such rare characters as enjoy the power of commanding their neighbours the office holds no advantages. It is clearly stated that it is part of the duty of a householder to undertake this arduous and unrewarding work for his fellows; on that condition will his fellows in their turn look after him. The present *gyapōns* in Lingthem are Kurma and Tinkep. Their term of office finishes in the early autumn of 1937 and they will be replaced by Agyung, the adopted son of Serving,

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624 and Itup the son of Takneum *youmi*. There is also a *gyapōn* in Panung and one in Liklyang.

iii

[622] The objects of the four above-named offices are twofold; the regulation of intra-village affairs and the collection of taxes for the State. Within the village crime has to be prevented and possibly punished, quarrels stopped, and the poor and needy helped.

651 There is a fixed tax of Rs. 5 a year on each house, a small tax on certain grain seeds which are sown for crops and a sales tax on the cardamum fruit, which is regulated according to the price fetched and automatically deducted at selling.[5] The total tax payable by the fifty houses under Chala Mandal's jurisdiction is Rs. 3500, averaging Rs. 70[6] per household. The money is collected by the *gyapōn* and taken by the Mandal to Gangtok. Although the payment of the taxes is somewhat resented, especially by the older men, it does not seem to me to bear hardly on the Lepchas. Both money and the cash-producing crop of cardamum were introduced together at the beginning of this century—formerly taxes were paid in kind—and everybody grows more than sufficient cardamum to pay their taxes. There are nevertheless some arrears of taxes in Lingthem; indeed a couple of households are seven years in arrear, and that not through poverty but through fecklessness. So feckless are they that the Mandal has threatened that if they do not pay by the next year he will refuse to be responsible for them, in which case they will be summoned to the chief Court in Gangtok. Generally

[5] The actual taxes on seed are as follows:—

Wet rice	Rs. –/8 on 8 lbs.
Millet and maize	Rs. –/12 on 8 lbs.
Dry rice	Rs. 1/– on 32 lbs.

Other crops are not taxed. The tax on cardamum is graduated according to the selling price per maund of 80 lbs.

If the maund fetches	Rs. 10/–	the tax is	Rs. –/14
" " "	Rs. 20/–	"	Rs. 1/8
" " "	Rs. 40/–	"	Rs. 2/8.

This tax has recently been reduced. Formerly it was at Rs. 2/8 at under Rs. 20, and Rs. 5/– over that sum. The 1936 price of cardamum was Rs. 12/– a maund. There is also a small tax, not very efficiently collected, on animals pastured in, or produce gathered from the forest.

[6] About £5 7 0 or 26 dollars.

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would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents. 636

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true. [576]

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate 578 626 634

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636

objects. He is one of the very rare people in Lingthem who habitually hits animals. Finally, after he had been Muktair for about six months he assaulted with his stick old Takneum *youmi*, beating him after an argument about a matter of no importance. Immediately after this an agitation was started to get rid of him. The first person to make the discontent vocal was an old man of Tasso, in no way directly connected with either of the parties of the dispute. The Mandals of the five villages consulted together, and then each Mandal held meetings of all the adults where the matter was discussed in the greatest detail; these meetings were held in Lingthem monastery and at the houses of the different Mandals.

While these discussions were taking place, Tempa, though officially the superior of the Mandals, was forbidden by them to be present at any feasts or public gatherings either in the monastery or in private houses. Finally it was decided that so violent and irresponsible a man was unsuitable in a position of authority. A petition signed by all the householders of the district demanded that Tempa be removed from his office; they explained that he was using unjustifiable violence; they said that he was a stranger and did not know their ways; and they requested that the second office of Muktair be abolished and that the Muktair of Gyatong should in future administer their territory also. The Court granted their request, after which Tempa, reduced from all authority to the position of a private householder, was readmitted to the communal feasts and gatherings. No lasting animosity was displayed against Tempa but everybody knows the history and draws the moral; Tempa was angry, but being faced with complete unanimity he could do nothing. Today he is still angry with Takneum *youmi* and the two never visit each other on any occasion; they will, however, eat together in neutral places without quarrelling. This possibility of exclusion is the major Lepcha sanction; the person who is not allowed to feasts and who is not visited, who is in fact 'sent to Coventry' leads a very dull and lonely life; but more than that, if he is not allowed to help other people other people will not help him and it is hard to get through the agricultural and domestic work without help. Similar pressure, it is said, is brought to bear whenever anybody in authority, whether that authority be hereditary or through Court appointment, shows any tendency to abuse his position. It is a most effective control.

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

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626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable
154 to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of
[762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying
[673] to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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762 actually endangering his life.[6] One of the reasons for believing in the guilt of Hlatam the 'poisoner' was that both she and her son Aga must have been aware of what was said about them and neither had demonstrated their innocence by attempting to kill themselves.

Verbal threats of suicide are occasionally made, but they are taken little notice of. When they are drunk Dunbi, because he is poor, and Katel, because his second wife won't sleep with him, threaten to kill themselves. Children also occasionally threaten to kill themselves if they think they are unjustly scolded or ill-treated; when he was young Pembu, an exceptionally nervous man, used to make such threats, and Chano's younger son, who was brought up by an 'aunt' also does so occasionally; to such threats the parents retort that nobody wants such a naughty child.[7]

626 With this ever-present possibility of provoking shame and even suicide it can be seen that malicious gossip and scandal assume very considerable emotional importance. People are worried as to what their neighbours are saying about them behind their backs; one or two even said that the reason for having '*ingzong*' (special friends) in one's own village was so that if people spoke ill of you you would have somebody whom you can completely trust to tell you what is being said. My impression is that very little scandal is spoken, and that when people did discuss potentially scandalous or disagreeable situations they did so very seriously and with hushed voices, taking care that no children or ignorant neighbours should listen to what they were saying.

626 157 The potential influence of hostile talk has I think further results: it is a very strong sanction to encourage Lepchas to conform to the approved methods of behaviour; and it also makes people chary of expressing judgements about their neighbours. If you ask a Lepcha who in his village has any outstanding quality, whether good or bad, he will almost certainly reply that everybody is much of a muchness. In many ways I think this does represent the real Lepcha attitude; affection is based on mutual services, not on emotion, and consequently difference in character is of much less importance than difference of treatment. Only character traits strongly opposed to Lepcha ideals were spontaneously commented on, and those seldom; cruelty, avarice, untruthfulness,

[6] For an example of this see the story of the attempted suicide of Jiroong's sister in Chapter Sixteen, p. 428.

[7] See also the history of Chélé's threats of suicide; Chapter Six, pp. 164–165.

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people 626
who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to 157
llot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example
hat A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less
generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters 828
of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves
vere; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotion-
lly and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather
han for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay
found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people,
articularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly
nd altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but
when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel
hey obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not
reated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully
ny reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish
nd did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a
ufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was
o reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations.
n the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsi-
ness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was
doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining
n the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he
was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness.
If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through
laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be
reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of
another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always
turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see
into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to 153
describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the
average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their
more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably
vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize
intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their char-
acteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

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587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open. [626] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 428 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die. 685

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12] 627 [689]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:— [582]

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

627 it will be presumed that this is owing to the malevolent action of a supernatural, and exorcism will be resorted to.

It may happen, however, that the quarrel is of a more serious nature and consists of accusations and counter-accusations. Should such a quarrel break out there is a whole apparatus for patching it up without official notice being taken of it; should the Mandal hear of it in his official capacity, worse still should it go to the Court, it would be a terrible thing; there would be strict punishment and bad blood and that would be a slur on the community.

When a quarrel does break out the *gyapōn* will in the first instance go to both houses to find out the cause of the quarrel, and, if possible, to a third neutral person as witness. He talks diplomatically to both parties, softening each other's version of the incident; if he can make peace in this way all three will drink *chi* together and that is the end of the matter. If, however, the two parties persist in quarrelling (owing to a sense of injury) the *gyapōn* will instruct both parties to prepare *chi* and to have a certain sum of money ready—always considerably larger than what would actually be needed—in order to make the people realise the seriousness of their offence.

Chi takes about eight or nine days to be ready, and while it is brewing the *gyapōn* consults with the *youmi*; they then make another effort to compose the quarrel without calling in the Mandal. The three adjudicators take a statement from each party and then, unless the blame is obviously on one side, they call them together and threaten them that if they do not make peace, they will be very heavily fined (say Rs. 25 from each of them). The sum demanded is calculated to be beyond their reach, so that they beg the *youmi* and *gyapōn* not to proceed further; whereupon the *gyapōn* agrees to be contented with a much lesser sum, say Rs. 2/8 from each, or if they have no money, with a copper vessel or plate or anything of equivalent value. After that the two quarrellers and the three adjudicators eat and drink *chi* together; at the end of the feast the two quarrellers are given a wordy and imposing sermon on the duty of living amicably at peace one with another; at the end of the sermon the fines are returned and the whole matter is at an end.

627 578 In the last three years in Lingthem there have been two serious quarrels. Both of them centred round Mrs. Jiroong; she is Tempa's sister, like him a foreigner to Zongu; she is far more aggressive and has a far more active ego-feeling than the other local-born Lepcha women. The first quarrel was with the wife of the lama

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Datoop whom she accused of seducing her husband; they had two noisy and public quarrels in the guardian's house by the monastery, so that the Mandal was forced to interfere. Mrs. Datoop easily proved her innocence; as a punishment Mrs. Jiroong has been permanently forbidden to enter the monastery compound when feasts are in progress. This effectively cuts her off from the major community relaxations, and incidentally gives her hen-pecked husband, who is a lama and therefore has to be present, an opportunity to escape from her constant scoldings.

The second quarrel was of a more complicated nature; like the first, it represents an attitude towards sex which is completely alien to the Lepchas of Zongu. The facts are briefly as follows. Jiroong, the youngest son of a very poor family, was married by the Mandal to an old and childless widow (his first wife, since dead) so that he could inherit her property. His eldest brother had a son Tobgé who, on his father's death, gave up his old home, and went with his wife to go and live with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Jiroong never liked Tobgé, whom she considered treated her without sufficient respect; so, to revenge herself, she persuaded Mrs. Tobgé to run away with a young married neighbour named Dadool. To forward the elopement she accompanied Mrs. Tobgé and Dadool on a visit to Mrs. Tobgé's parents who live on the far side of the Teesta beyond Zongu. After they had been absent three days the matter was reported to the *gyapön*. Before they could take any action however it was learned that Jiroong and Tempa had already gone in pursuit. On their arrival they asked what was the meaning of the escapade, to which the women replied that they had come to see Mrs. Tobgé's family. Tempa and Jiroong were furious at this reply, and, they said subsequently, felt that they could have killed Mrs. Tobgé, whom they considered irresponsible and of a bad character; but the girl had many 'brothers', and they undertook to be responsible for her and to send her home. Dadool returned separately. On their return the Mandal lectured the two young people and told them that they were to live quietly with their own spouses and to behave in future.

Since then Tobgé and Dadool have kept the peace and appear friendly enough; but the enmity between Tobgé and Mrs. Jiroong is stronger than ever, and there is no certainty that the affair will not flair up again. It is known that Dadool and Mrs. Tobgé are still sleeping together for they have been surprised in a field-house, but there is no way of telling if Tobgé himself knows of this.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

627 For a few days Dadool worked for us, fetching fire-wood and water. Jiroong's house is one of the nearest to the monastery.
578 One night, it was believed, Dadool did not return home, and in the morning his wife was not in the home either. Towards midday a a very serious deputation, headed by Mrs. Datoop and Kurma *gyapön* came and asked us to dismiss Dadool; the proximity of Jiroong's house, it was felt, put temptation in his way. The situation was discussed very seriously in low and distressed voices; it was not, as similar circumstances would probably be with us, a rather spicy piece of scandal—for the people involved were in no way directly related—but the threat of impending general unpleasantness. If Mrs. Dadool had gone to complain to her 'brothers' there would be a considerable upset; they would send their *bek-bu* (marriage go-between) to the Mandal, who had been Dadool's *bek-bu*, to say 'You persuaded us to consent to this marriage, and now see what has happened.' If this occurred the Mandal would have to inflict two fines of Rs. 5/– each on Mrs. Tobgé which she would have to pay to Mrs. Dadool, and Dadool would have to pay Rs. 5/– to Tobgé. Fortunately on this occasion their apprehensions were not realised; Dadool turned up in the afternoon with a reasonable account of how he had spent the previous evening; and later in the day his wife returned from Mangan, whither she had gone to buy cigarettes.

The whole situation is a good illustration of Lepcha attitudes. Normally sexual intercourse would not be the subject of serious conversation at all, though it might be joked about; and it seems probable that without Mrs. Jiroong's continual encouragement the affaire would have lapsed long ago, for Dadool appears fond of his wife and contented. But a quarrel or dispute is a menace to everybody's happiness; half the pleasure is lost from a feast if there is a feeling of discomfort in the air. For the Lepchas quarrelling is not natural or inevitable, but a deplorable accident which it is everybody's business to stop.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FIVE

LAW AND ORDER

i

Zongu, as part of the Maharajah of Sikkim's private estate, is administered for him by one of the Kazi, or hereditary ministers and landowners. It is at present under the Rhennock Kazi, who has succeeded the Mali Kazi. Except on very rare occasions the Kazi does not visit the reserve; the Mandals and Muktair pay relatively frequent visits to Gangtok to pay over the taxes to him and to consult him on any problems of internal administration.

Administratively Zongu is divided into twelve villages, each with a Mandal[1] at its head. Until the beginning of this century there were no intermediaries between the Mandals and the Kazi in charge; but some thirty years ago, at the instance of the Maharani, the aunt of the present Maharajah, the office of Muktair[2] was instituted. The Muktair is superior to the Mandals; he can deal with misdemeanours carrying a fine of not more than Rs. 60, while the Mandals can only deal with fines of Rs. 30 or less; he has to supervise all tax-accounts, and visits each village twice yearly to inspect the fields and see that grain has not been planted in excess of the amount on which tax has been paid; he has also to make a register of births and deaths. At first he was also responsible for the collection of taxes, but Tafoor's father, when he held the office, made a muddle of this job, and the actual collection and payment of the monies reverted to the Mandals. I was told that the Muktair receives as salary 4 per cent of the money collected and 4 annas on each house, but the sum seems to me excessive.

The history of this office of Muktair gives a good illustration of

[1] The term *Mandal* is not a Lepcha nor even a Sikkimese word. It is the common word for the head of the village throughout Northern India. It is however in universal use among the Lepchas, having completely displaced the Sikkimese-Tibetan *La-chen* and the Lepcha *Jem-mi*.

[2] The Sikkimese-Tibetan term is *Tong-yoop*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

636 the workings of Lepcha democracy. The original appointee of the Maharani was a Tibetan (or Sikkimese; the Lepchas do not distinguish the two races) who lived at Hi; but the Lepchas did not like having a stranger set over them and asked for the office to be given to Lepchas; the Court, which is always sensitive to such petitions, acquiesced, and the office was split into two: the seven villages on the Teesta side were put in charge of a man of Hi, and the five on the Talung side in charge of Tafoor's father. The man at Hi fulfilled the office satisfactorily, and his son is now the Muktair of the whole of Zongu; he is a youngish man and has so far no male children; he gives general satisfaction in his performance of the office.

When Tafoor's father died in 1935 Tafoor should normally have succeeded him. There were however some objections to his taking the office; he could not read or write Nepali or Sikkimese, in which all official business is transacted, but only ecclesiastical Tibetan. Even more important was the fact that he was the only relatively young lama who was sufficiently learned to be able to direct the monastery when the present old Dorjé Lapoon died; and he was
789 the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who had the requisite knowledge and who had gone through the mystic training necessary
636 for the stopping of rain and hail. This power is firmly believed in by the lamaists of Tibet and Sikkim, and in the extremely rainy Talung valley is a most useful and necessary accomplishment. If Tafoor had become Muktair he would not have had the necessary time for these religious pursuits, and therefore, somewhat against Tafoor's private desires, the householders requested that he might be allowed to continue his ecclesiastical work.

636 While the matter was still undecided the Rhennock Kazi and the Political Officer came to stop at the *dak*-bungalow at Singhik. An individual called Tempa from Lingthem went and offered his services to them, and with his fluent Nepali and Tibetan made himself very useful. At the end of their visit he asked the Rhennock Kazi to appoint him Muktair of the five Talung villages, and the request was granted.

Tempa is a man of forty-four who was born in Savong near Gangtok, well outside Zongu. He claims to be a pure Lepcha, but both his character and appearance are different to the Lepchas of Zongu. He was the only man in Lingthem to have any facial hair; he had a straggling fringe of coarse black beard round his face. When he was about fifteen he became a coolie of the present

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents. 636

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true. [576]

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate 578 626 634

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

578 626 636 objects. He is one of the very rare people in Lingthem who habitually hits animals. Finally, after he had been Muktair for about six months he assaulted with his stick old Takneum *youmi*, beating him after an argument about a matter of no importance. Immediately after this an agitation was started to get rid of him. The first person to make the discontent vocal was an old man of Tasso, in no way directly connected with either of the parties of the dispute. The Mandals of the five villages consulted together, and then each Mandal held meetings of all the adults where the matter was discussed in the greatest detail; these meetings were held in Lingthem monastery and at the houses of the different Mandals.

While these discussions were taking place, Tempa, though officially the superior of the Mandals, was forbidden by them to be present at any feasts or public gatherings either in the monastery or in private houses. Finally it was decided that so violent and irresponsible a man was unsuitable in a position of authority. A petition signed by all the householders of the district demanded that Tempa be removed from his office; they explained that he was using unjustifiable violence; they said that he was a stranger and did not know their ways; and they requested that the second office of Muktair be abolished and that the Muktair of Gyatong should in future administer their territory also. The Court granted their request, after which Tempa, reduced from all authority to the position of a private householder, was readmitted to the communal feasts and gatherings. No lasting animosity was displayed against Tempa but everybody knows the history and draws the moral; Tempa was angry, but being faced with complete unanimity he could do nothing. Today he is still angry with Takneum *youmi* and the two never visit each other on any occasion; they will, however, eat together in neutral places without quarrelling. This possibility of exclusion is the major Lepcha sanction; the person who is not allowed to feasts and who is not visited, who is in fact 'sent to Coventry' leads a very dull and lonely life; but more than that, if he is not allowed to help other people other people will not help him and it is hard to get through the agricultural and domestic work without help. Similar pressure, it is said, is brought to bear whenever anybody in authority, whether that authority be hereditary or through Court appointment, shows any tendency to abuse his position. It is a most effective control.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHALA MANDAL, THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE

TEMPA, THE DEPOSED MUKTAIR

[Facing p. 128]

142
622
291
[634]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[346] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

kness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc.
e first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good
irit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a
riod antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by
e introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has,
d still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
kim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then
e country has become more tranquil and, as far as the
ows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors.
kim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the
utias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has
come firmly established; the Gurkhas have also com-
nced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious
nery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With
e destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the
ntry will pass away, the climate will change, and unless
edy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will
e, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said,
t enough has been represented to account for the
plorable fall of the Lepchas.

'Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
d primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably
wn. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold
d silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise,
s or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is
nced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
sion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists
their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
ersity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
ost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which
forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of
they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the
ties of each genus of plants, which would require the
l of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 614 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [651]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, 692 but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

rice as a food. The fact that the offering of sacrifices to the 241
deities concerned with farming was preponderantly a woman's
concern, leads us to conclude that farming was originally [174]
the work of the women. In the olden days the fields were
burnt out in order to prepare them for the plantation. Part
of the forest was burnt, cleaned up, and the cultivation of grain
would be carried on for one or two years, after which
the tribesmen would move away to another area. This
is known as shifting cultivation. Today, the burning of fields
is controlled by government, lest too much damage be done [136]
to the forests. The permanent field system is the common
practice today. (Fig. 25-27)

The Rong originally dug up their fields with the use of
the hoe, and they did not use the plough. They have taken [177]
over the plough only recently from the Indians and the Ne-
palese. The Lepcha's knowledge of farming was very ele-
mentary and they could by no means compete with the Indian
and Nepalese farmers. There was a reason behind this. The
Lepchas were not totally dependent for their existence on [222
farming, for the collection of roots and plants, and hunting, 224]
offered them rich sources of nourishment. A little cattle-
breeding goes hand in hand with farming. They keep a 231
few cattle and goats ; sheep are kept very seldom, and at the
most one or two pigs. The cattle are the mountain Zebu.
The humps of these animals are feebly developed, but for the
rest they are strong animals. The Zebu are generally of a
black colour. The goats are of a poor variety and have no
special breed. The pig, which is different in shape from the
black Chinese pig, has as its forbear the black Himalayan
boar. The stomach of the pig does not hang down low ; it
has small erect ears, a strong mane of bristles, and a long and
pointed head. A Lepcha who is well off keeps about eight to [311]
ten cattle, and among these are two pairs of oxen for cultivation.
The other animals are milk cows and calves. The milk [234
provided by these animals is used mainly for tea ; but occa- 252]
sionally butter is made from it. The number of goats reared
is also not very large—ranging from ten to fifteen among the
richer folk. The cattle and goats are driven to the grassy [312]
slopes for grazing throughout the day and in the evening they
return to their stalls. (Fig. 28)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living [774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the [775] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence. [772] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological [777] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 125/127. N. 4. p. 358.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 336, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164- 787] goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits 772] of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as if it were human seed from a husband and the women are fertilised and fruitful. 775 [776 777]

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a-ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37] 773

The Dän-ai Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kafir-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-she-thing and Tög-bu-thing then came into being. But 773 776

36. op. cit. p. 235 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ging near Maria-Basti.

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773 the real god of creation is It-bo. He has a wife by name of
[776] De-bo. (It-bo and De-bo mean "to produce" and "to create.") It-bo first created a man Ti-gung-thik. He then took a bone from the body of this man and out of it he created a wife for him. The place where the first human beings lived was called Da-lon-par-tan. (This is also the plain in which the tower intended to reach heaven was constructed.) The first couple lived there in perfect happiness and contentment until they became sinful. When they fell into sin the god Rum punished them by sending great floods which continued unabated for fifteen days so that all the people were drowned. Only one Lepcha couple were able to save themselves in a wooden ship.

Stocks narrates the following myth of creation : "In the beginning there was only sea, and the creator Tashey-takbo-
[772] thing made two kinds of fish,—ngo, was the common kind, while the ngo-yang had a serpent form. From the sea we believe that a tortoise supports the world, and on it Tashey-takbo-thing created birds and animals.

Then he tried to make a form of man from butter, but it would not stand up, as whenever he made it, it melted. (Had the butter only remained firm, we should all have been very beautiful). Then he made a human form of earth and mud, and wind came into this resemblance of man and life was created. Then Tashey-takbo-thing made blood out of the water which he put in it and the bones he created from stone. Then he moved away to see whether the creature he had made could answer him and speak, but as he had no nerves or veins he was unable to do so. So Tashey-takbo-thing picked a great many creepers from the jungle and from those which he spread all over the form, it spoke.

Thus was the first male created, but as there was no female he was lonely, and could not reproduce himself. One day as he was catching birds with his snare in the jungle, Tashey-takbo-thing entangled a woman in one for him to catch. So the man caught her and brought her to his home ; but at first they could not marry as there was no go between to help them to talk over the matter. But at last the Rum decided to send the owl (tam-bum) down the country of creation,

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773 173 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 772 The myth describing the building of the tower demonstrates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 289 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 336 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 337.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas.

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sön-lyang, originally called Söm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else."

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

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773
he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[55]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

55. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER FIVE

LAW AND ORDER

i

Zongu, as part of the Maharajah of Sikkim's private estate, is administered for him by one of the Kazi, or hereditary ministers and landowners. It is at present under the Rhennock Kazi, who has succeeded the Mali Kazi. Except on very rare occasions the Kazi does not visit the reserve; the Mandals and Muktair pay relatively frequent visits to Gangtok to pay over the taxes to him and to consult him on any problems of internal administration.

Administratively Zongu is divided into twelve villages, each with a Mandal[1] at its head. Until the beginning of this century there were no intermediaries between the Mandals and the Kazi in charge; but some thirty years ago, at the instance of the Maharani, the aunt of the present Maharajah, the office of Muktair[2] was instituted. The Muktair is superior to the Mandals; he can deal with misdemeanours carrying a fine of not more than Rs. 60, while the Mandals can only deal with fines of Rs. 30 or less; he has to supervise all tax-accounts, and visits each village twice yearly to inspect the fields and see that grain has not been planted in excess of the amount on which tax has been paid; he has also to make a register of births and deaths. At first he was also responsible for the collection of taxes, but Tafoor's father, when he held the office, made a muddle of this job, and the actual collection and payment of the monies reverted to the Mandals. I was told that the Muktair receives as salary 4 per cent of the money collected and 4 annas on each house, but the sum seems to me excessive.

The history of this office of Muktair gives a good illustration of

[1] The term *Mandal* is not a Lepcha nor even a Sikkimese word. It is the common word for the head of the village throughout Northern India. It is however in universal use among the Lepchas, having completely displaced the Sikkimese-Tibetan *La-chen* and the Lepcha *Jem-mi*.

[2] The Sikkimese-Tibetan term is *Tong-yoop*.

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175 but it would seem as though this original colonisation was little more than a feudal overlordship imposed by a small minority on the Lepcha population. After the internal revolution and Chinese wars in Tibet in the early seventeenth century three 'Red Hat' lamas fled to Sikkim, speedily converted the Lepchas and what other inhabitants there were, and created a Sikkimese Tibetan king; from this king the present Maharajah of Sikkim is indirectly descended. A subsequent legend puts back the conversion of Sikkim to lamaism some centuries earlier; it is said that one of the lamaist saints lived in the country and deposited sacred writings in various caves, where they were subsequently discovered.

From the time of the establishment of a Sikkimese kingdom the Lepchas became an 'inferior' subject race, under the domination of the Sikkimese Tibetans or Bhotias, to which race the Maharajah and the big landowners belonged. For a considerable period the Lepchas were debarred on account of their race from entering the lamaist monasteries, and, though this rule is now relaxed, it is questionable whether a Lepcha could today obtain an important position in the big monasteries outside the Lepcha reserve. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Lepchas fought with the Sikkimese against the continued invasions of the Nepali and Bhutanese; the country was then in a very uncertain state, and there was continuous slave-raiding; the memory of this is still kept lively by the threat which older people will make to a crying child that 'If you don't keep quiet a Tibetan (or Bhutanese) will come along with a big bag and take you away.' During the early nineteenth century a number of treaties were made between Sikkim and British India, broken, and re-made; finally in 1835 the Darjeeling district, naturally together with its inhabitants, was ceded by the Maharajah to the British in exchange for an annuity.

648 It can be seen that the Lepchas have been for a considerable period a subject race, under the domination of the Bhotias and English. They are agriculturists and hunters, but in Sikkim the best land has been taken by the Bhotias, and later by the Nepali who have immigrated into the country in great numbers; in Darjeeling much of the jungle and agricultural land has been turned into tea-estates, and the Lepchas have become workers on the

Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (edited by Filippo de Filippi. London. George Routledge. 1932). Writing in the early eighteenth century Desideri speaks of Sikkim (p. 118 and *passim*) as a province of Tibet, which had to pay tribute to Lhassa, and he makes no mention of its relatively recent conquest. He calls the province Brée-mé-jong, which means, 'the nice country.'

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tea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable infiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively infertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the Lepchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.

The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference of about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures for Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with its unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly disappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous interlocking community, and this, as well as their almost complete suppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable breakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book would have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not made the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, where he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may become landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals can be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of the British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these Lepchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little and poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation of this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been interfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as will be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the economic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly far-reaching.

Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only had slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear to subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great extent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their neighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is the official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a tiny minority of the population of the district; they appear to have lost almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely forgotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the children round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except Nepali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas have no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the social group they have been left with little except their appearance and their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

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declaration that they will not pass the frontiers of Tibet, Bhutan or Nepal; those who break this obligation are liable to imprisonment and punishment if caught. S 648

As far as I can see the State of Sikkim is well and paternally administered; the extremely precipitous nature of the whole country has rendered road-building extremely difficult; but the main mule roads into Tibet are kept up in a good state, and solid bridges have been built on these roads. Sikkim has few natural resources except for some small copper mines in the south and (as far as I could tell, undeveloped) large quantities of mica-bearing stone in the north. Sikkim is strategically important as being on the main road between Tibet and India, and nearly all the trade between the two countries passes through it. The Political Officer, assisted by trade agents inside the Tibetan frontier, overlooks this traffic; he also advises the Maharajah on questions of policy. S 487 S [135] S [644]

Since the middle of the last century Sikkim has been free from war and the fear of war, and its history has been as uneventful and as happy as the poorness of the country allows. The only diversion of a military nature in which Sikkim has been involved was the Younghusband expedition to Lhassa in 1905–06 in which several Sikkimese and Lepchas took part. In recent years there has been so great an immigration of Nepalis into Sikkim that it is probable that in the southern part of the country these invaders outnumber the original inhabitants; laws have been passed prohibiting their settling to the north of certain fixed points, but it is not certain to what extent these laws are enforced. S 175 S [167]

The pacification of the whole country through the British protectorate has given the Lepchas general security; besides abolishing slave-raiding it has also put an end to the mild peonage which formerly existed among the Lepchas themselves. One day in Lingthem the lama Jiroong, when he was rather drunk, embarked on a widely applauded panegyric of the beneficial influence of the British, and of their confirmation in power of the Maharajah. Before the English came, he said, we Lepchas were harried by Tibetans and Nepali and could not settle anywhere for fear we should be sold as slaves; now we have our homes and can cultivate our crops. L 648 L [567]

Jiroong himself is the descendant of former slaves. Some generations ago his ancestor, then a small boy, was kidnapped by Bhutanese; but the boy was rescued by the then head of the village L 567

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572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

iii

648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is

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sent to the Mandal, who then makes up his mind as to which boys are the most suitable and then goes through the formality of consulting the parents. This is really only a formality, for the Mandal will choose the most suitable boys, and there is usually a very limited choice. 648

Datoop's eldest son, Pembu, spent nearly eleven years in Gangtok in the Maharajah's palace, first going there when he was a very little boy; he lived with a distant 'aunt'. He rose to be a footman and received quite good wages; he finally left owing to a dispute with his 'aunt' and 'uncle'. Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother, when he was about fifteen, spent a year as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchen; at the end of that time he ran away because he was forced to kill chickens almost every day, and for one coming from such a pious family of lamas this sinful act was intolerably painful. He apparently showed some aptitude, for the cook tried to persuade him to stay so that he could take his place. When he first returned home Chudo exhibited a certain fussiness about cleanliness and such like follies, but he soon grew out of them. He made no attempt to introduce 'European style' cooking which he considered a complete waste of time. Both he and Pembu were married shortly after their return home and they have settled back completely into their society.

Such is not the case with Pichi, Datoop's second son, and Bahada, Ongden's second son, both of whom spent three years in the State carpentry school at Gangtok. They received their training and free board and lodging; in repayment they have to hold themselves and their skill at the disposition of the State, and to go wherever they are needed. In the spring of 1937 these two were only lately returned home and both seemed rather disgruntled at the change. Pichi, who was taken ill and had elaborate exorcisms performed over him, privately expressed considerable scepticism. Most disquieting of all, they refused to accept the marriages which had been arranged for them; when they wanted to get married, they said, they would choose their wives for themselves. In the face of their obstinacy their elders were powerless; but it was felt and said that this modern self-reliance would come to no good. It is possible that in a few years' time they, like their elders who underwent similar experiences, will settle down comfortably into their native society; at the moment both of them are rather seriously maladjusted.

Except for such State servants, and for the Mandal and those

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eir baggage and marching out, this was effected.* 175
"We then left, and Lassoo Kajee accompanied us and
ked us to send an escort with him to Mr. Eden at Temi, for
was on his way there on the previous evening, and hearing
ing ran down again, and falling on the rocks hurt his leg
verely. Ascending the ridge towards our camp we saw Mr.
den and Cheboo Lama coming down the ridge behind us
om Temi, he having understood that I was encamped on
e river bank. I returned to him with Lassoo Kajee, and
e then went to the river bank and talked with some of the
ople on the opposite side, and it was arranged that those
ho wished might cross on rafts. Mr. Eden then returned to
emi and I to my camp."

To the above account it is only necessary to add that 648
endly relations have continued with Sikkim ever since, and
at the country, although completely independent, is now
e chief refuge of tired Calcutta residents in search of health.
ountaineers, mostly from Europe, are also visiting the
untry in ever-increasing numbers; and hardly a year now
sses without some hitherto virgin peak being climbed.
inchinjunga, however, has so far resisted every assault, and
seems likely that many years will pass before man is able to
ercome its most formidable defences.

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perial Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. Oxford, 1908.

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* "On leaving Namchi, the force was divided into three parties, the main umn, under Captain Impey, proceeding direct towards the Teesta, and o parties, under Colonel Gawler and Captain Urwin respectively, making g detours to the left and right, with the view of all reuniting again at the esta. Captain Impey's column surprised the Sikkimese camp at Temi; y fled, leaving their clothes and weapons, and were pursued down thin a few miles of the Teesta. From that time no further attempt at position was made; the people were perfectly paralysed at the rapid vements of the troops, whom they perceived to be advancing in several ections at once, by forced marches, through dense forests, and over thless mountains, traversing in one day distances which even the natives these hills considered to be three fair marches."—*Extract from Mr. Eden's al report, No. 40, April 8th*, 1861.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Besides the knowledge of edible objects the Rong are well acquainted with poisons. They know the secret of a deadly poison for making poisoned arrows. A fairly thick layer is smeared on the lower half of the arrow head but none whatsoever on the point. A very slight wound is enough to kill any animal. The great advantage of this poison is that it does not enter the blood stream but acts locally so that the entire flesh is not poisoned. The injured portion has necessarily to be cut away. The poison consists of a very complicated mixture of ingredients which points to the long experience the Lepchas have in its manufacture. The first ingredient, "Father of the poison" called ning-dyūd, is obtained from Tibet. The theory is that a bird scrapes out of the earth a peculiar root, eats part of it and gains immense strength. The Tibetans collect the remainder of the root and trade with the Lepchas who prepare the poison. Death quickly ensues if even the tiniest fragment of the root is consumed. Another ingredient, bar-lang, is a root, which, in the language of the Rong, is called rog-log. The third ingredient is obtained from gōn-chong. Neither of the roots is found in the high mountains but has to be procured from the neighbourhood of the plains. Yet another root is called se-red in Lepcha, and ga-gra in Nepalese. In addition there is the poison extracted from the root of a shrub which bears a yellow flower, and whose name the hunter could no longer remember. Gōn-liong-rik serves as the "conduct" for these poisons. So potent is the effect of this poison that a person is liable to lose his life even if he inhales the odour it gives off for too long a period. Without the admixture of the poison from Tibet, the other poisons cannot be localised and the entire flesh of the animal would be rendered unedible. Thus we see that the poison for arrows is very complicated and the process of preparation is known only to the Rong. The other people fear them because of this knowledge of poisons.

The fruit of the above-mentioned rog-log is called rog-log-pot, and only a very few people are in a position to procure it. A strong poison is made from it. A poison for the killing of fish is called bū-rū. This is obtained from the leaves of the gol-gung tree by rubbing them down in a mortar. The poison, if thrown into a tank, kills all the fish but in no way makes them inedible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

return by themselves to their owners' houses, where they are given a feed of salt and powdered grain. Tethered animals are also fed with gathered leaves. Each animal has its name, which it knows; unless they wander into enclosed fields they are never beaten nor spoken to roughly. As you walk about Lingthem you come upon untended cattle in every direction; and one of the strangest sights is to watch the animals returning home of an evening. A herd of cattle, perhaps a score or more, will arrive in the centre of a group of houses, and will then each turn away to their own homes; as soon as they have settled under their houses they are given their evening feed. Stranger still is the fact that during the cold months—roughly from February to April—all the cattle, except the milch-cows, are sent in an untended group into the forest up the hill behind the village. When people want their cattle back they go up the hill to the place where they are liable to congregate, or, as the Lepchas put it 'where the cattle live in the forest', usually under some noticeably big tree. Within twenty-four hours cattle which have been completely untended for four months can be collected and brought back. While the cattle are in the forest a State tax of two annas a head a month is charged.

The taming of animals so completely is a remarkable feat in itself, and is also a good symbol of the Lepchas' chief attitudes; I think it has also an important bearing on their psychological development. In neighbouring tribes herding cattle is one of the major occupations of growing boys; in this way they achieve a certain self-reliance and learn to exercise their judgement. This discipline is almost completely absent for Lepcha boys; only when predatory animals are known or suspected to be in the neighbourhood are they set to watch animals. All through his childhood and adolescence the Lepcha boy is under the supervision of, and usually in company with his elders; and I feel sure that the lack of self-reliance, the inability to stand alone, which is one of the most obvious characteristics of the young Lepcha man, is enhanced by the lack of any work specially given over to children.

The size of the herds varies very considerably. The average is about six or seven head; a few households have considerably more and some people have only one or two, or even none at all.

Goats are raised exclusively for food and sacrifice and are never milked; they are not highly esteemed and people usually only

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

624 and Itup the son of Takneum *youmi*. There is also a *gyapôn* in Panung and one in Liklyang.

iii

[622] The objects of the four above-named offices are twofold; the regulation of intra-village affairs and the collection of taxes for the State. Within the village crime has to be prevented and possibly punished, quarrels stopped, and the poor and needy helped.

651 There is a fixed tax of Rs. 5 a year on each house, a small tax on certain grain seeds which are sown for crops and a sales tax on the cardamum fruit, which is regulated according to the price fetched and automatically deducted at selling.[5] The total tax payable by the fifty houses under Chala Mandal's jurisdiction is Rs. 3500, averaging Rs. 70[6] per household. The money is collected by the *gyapôn* and taken by the Mandal to Gangtok. Although the payment of the taxes is somewhat resented, especially by the older men, it does not seem to me to bear hardly on the Lepchas. Both money and the cash-producing crop of cardamum were introduced together at the beginning of this century—formerly taxes were paid in kind—and everybody grows more than sufficient cardamum to pay their taxes. There are nevertheless some arrears of taxes in Lingthem; indeed a couple of households are seven years in arrear, and that not through poverty but through fecklessness. So feckless are they that the Mandal has threatened that if they do not pay by the next year he will refuse to be responsible for them, in which case they will be summoned to the chief Court in Gangtok. Generally

[5] The actual taxes on seed are as follows:—

Wet rice	Rs. –/8. on 8 lbs.
Millet and maize	Rs. –/12 on 8 lbs.
Dry rice	Rs. 1/– on 32 lbs.

Other crops are not taxed. The tax on cardamum is graduated according to the selling price per maund of 80 lbs.

If the maund fetches	Rs. 10/–	the tax is	Rs. –/14
" " "	Rs. 20/–	"	Rs. 1/8
" " "	Rs. 40/–	"	Rs. 2/8.

This tax has recently been reduced. Formerly it was at Rs. 2/8 at under Rs. 20, and Rs. 5/– over that sum. The 1936 price of cardamum was Rs. 12/– a maund. There is also a small tax, not very efficiently collected, on animals pastured in, or produce gathered from the forest.

[6] About £; 7 0 or 26 dollars.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Mandal makes up outstanding debts as far as he can out of his own property. 651

If through misfortune or poverty a man falls behind with his taxes the Mandal will advise him to collect materials for a feast. At this feast, called *hloang-ʒok*, the guests will contribute presents of money according to their ability, the money contributed being considered as an absolute gift, and not as a loan. In the last three years three people have thus been cleared of debt by voluntary contributions.

Actual crime takes up very little time. The only generally authenticated murder in the neighbourhood took place two centuries ago; but there are fairly constant rumours and suspicions of poisoning, and at least one instance of suspected foul play[7] which have to be cleared up. 674

In Lingthem an old widowed nun, Hlatam, the mother of Aga, is generally believed to possess a mysterious slow-acting 'poison,' which either she, or one of her ancestors, is said to have obtained from the Plains people. So strong was this suspicion that twenty years ago the Mandal had her seized while she was working in the fields; she was brought to the monastery where she was given a complete body search by some women, while the *youmi* and *gyapōn* ransacked her house: no trace of any poison was found, and after the accusation she prayed in the monastery, calling on the Gods to kill her if she possessed any poison. 754

Nevertheless the majority of the people of Lingthem still believe that she possesses poison. Chala Mandal says it is both a folly and a sin to call her a poisoner; there is no evidence of her murderous activities, there would be no advantage in her pursuing them and anyhow, where could she obtain the poison? Jiroong and one or two others agree with the Mandal, but the great majority take up the attitude that there is no smoke without fire, and some implicitly believe in her poisoning and are too frightened to take food or drink from her hands. Thus the lama Tafoor says that when he has to go to her house for a ceremony he makes it quite clear that he has come as a priest, and tells her that if he is ill subsequently everybody will know who to blame. Kurma believed that his second wife and her father were both killed by Hlatam; both died of stomach trouble which started almost immediately after receiving food from her, though death did not ensue till some months later.

This poison is considered to have partially natural and partially

[7] See Book Three. Chapter Fifteen pp. 402–403.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 614 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [651]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
[857] and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

But the settled areas of British India have an expensive British administration, for which, in the last instance, the peasant has to pay. This is not to deny, of course, that he gets certain benefits in return: good roads, schools, hospitals, and so on; but these are of more use to people who have already reached the higher economic levels. In the meantime the small tenant cultivator is forced to sell his own rice in order to pay his taxes, not to mention expensive litigation, which seems to increase steadily as conditions become ever more "settled." It seems all wrong to me.

* * * * *

Both men and women work in the fields, and there is no hard-and-fast division of labour between the sexes, although the heavier work is done mostly by men. Woman, as such, is an inferior being, but only because the Lamaist doctrine says so. "Even Buddhist nuns, excepting the very few so-called incarnations of celestial Bodhisats, are given an inferior position scarcely higher than lay devotees"; and to be born as a woman is a definite step backwards in the march towards Nirvana, the freedom from reincarnation, which is the goal of all true Buddhists. But this idea is completely foreign to the Lepcha, who does not recognise any inherent distinction between the temperament of the sexes; there is with them practically no such thing as "men's work" and "women's work."

Dr. Margaret Mead was the first to point out that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced. Two of the tribes she studied in New Guinea had "no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious rôles, different skills, different vulnerabilities to evil, magic and supernatural influences. The Arapesh believe that painting in colour is appropriate only to men, and the Mundugumor consider fishing an essentially feminine task. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability are inalienably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain, and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision 437 of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced 426 a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

whether they should get warm woollen clothes, or have to 426
put up with shoddy cotton. I should like to think that at 439
least the Tibetan farmer made something out of the transaction; but he, too, is in the hands of the Indian money-lenders in Kalimpong, caught in the intricacies of a vicious circle. The remedy is, of course, obvious; but in present circumstances almost impossible of attainment.

Cardamoms are a State monopoly, and the right to trade 655
in them has been sold to the official State Bankers, an out- 651
side concern which, in its turn, also controls all the money-lenders in the State. This is a convenient arrangement for the authorities and saves the provision of numerous extra officials; but even if the State itself assumed control of the business there would be no means of ensuring that the peasants were not cheated, petty (and usually underpaid) officials being much the same all over the East. Under the present system of taxation the people must obviously grow cardamoms, as in no other way can they raise the necessary cash with which to pay their taxes: and from a theoretical point of view their cultivation is a source of extra profit. Indeed, this actually is the case in many parts of Sikkim, where the people are more sophisticated, and better able to safeguard their own interests. There is no doubt that when the Maharaja's predecessors introduced this plant into Sikkim they did so with the motive of improving the people's economic condition; but in those days no one could be expected to foresee the disastrous effects of introducing uncontrolled monetary trading into an illiterate community, organised on socialist lines, which previously had no need of actual cash. As it is, cardamoms are a perfect curse in Jongu.

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521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of [313] course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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ea-plantations. In this district too there has been very considerable 648
nfiltration of Nepalis, coming from their crowded and relatively
nfertile country; more industrious and better cultivators than the
epchas, the Nepali are continuously displacing them everywhere.
The Lepchas also appear to be a dying race; there is a difference 161
f about 5,000 between the 1901 and the 1931 census; but the figures
or Sikkim are perhaps not altogether reliable. As a society, with
s unique conglomeration of attitudes, the Lepchas are certainly
isappearing, for their culture presupposes a homogeneous inter-
cking community, and this, as well as their almost complete
ppression of competition and aggression, causes an inevitable
reakdown of their culture in any mixed community. This book 361
ould have been impossible if the Maharajah of Sikkim had not
ade the part of his estate called Zongu into a Lepcha reserve, 657
here he has made a law that only pure-blooded Lepchas may
ecome landowners. It is only in Zongu and in one or two small
llages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha
ciety, practically undisturbed by alien influence. These survivals
n be considered artificial, as without the indirect pacification of
e British government and the benevolence of the Maharajah, these
epchas would, like their fellows, have been ousted from the little
d poor land which remains to them. But beyond the reservation
this piece of land for their exclusive use the society has not been
terfered with, nor preserved as a museum piece; it is still, as
ill be seen later, in a state of constant modification; indeed the
onomic changes of the last thirty years are likely to be particularly
-reaching.
Of the Lepchas outside Zongu I can say very little, for I only 184
d slight opportunities of observing them. In Sikkim they appear
subsist fairly well in the mixed communities, to a very great
tent adopting the habits, culture, and even the language of their
ighbours; they share with them the religion of lamaism, which is
e official religion of the State. In India they constitute only a
y minority of the population of the district; they appear to have
t almost all corporate unity; they have practically completely
gotten their own language, and it would appear that none of the
ldren round Kalimpong at any rate can speak anything except
pali. Lost in the overwhelming mass of alien people, the Lepchas
ve no social organisation; and since Lepcha life is based on the
cial group they have been left with little except their appearance
d their gentleness which can be called specifically Lepcha. All

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[8] Some sort

[8] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

my mind, that Nepali settlers would increase the yield of this extremely fertile land threefold; but they would do it to their own individual advantage. But if the Nepali, why not the Lepcha? The Lingtem people were always complaining that they could not afford an iron roof for the monastery. I should personally regret to see the present thatch removed; but that is for purely æsthetic reasons. A roof of corrugated iron would doubtless be more efficient, and if the people really want one, to say nothing of schools and other desiderata, it would be perfectly possible for them, by means of better agricultural methods, to raise the necessary funds. As at present constituted they have in their social structure all the makings of the perfect socialist state; but they have, of course, no leaders. What they require is a missionary; a non-religious missionary, that is; someone of the type that has obtained such remarkable results amongst the one-time ignorant peasants of Russia.

Jongu is now protected for the Lepchas and is to all intents and purposes an ethnological museum. Since it is a museum it may just as well be a good one; and the improvement of the people's condition, in which I would include sufficient education to free them from the thraldom of gods and demons, would form an unique opportunity for some educated Lepcha. There are many such in the Kalimpong district, where education has been long available; but removed from their natural environment Lepchas are forced to suppress their more altruistic characteristics in the general struggle for existence. In a district which cannot absorb even a fraction of its educated population this state of affairs is inevitable; at any rate until such time as manual work is no longer considered to be unsuited to the dignity of the so-called educated classes. In the meantime here is a chance for some public-spirited Lepcha; someone who still has some regard for the better qualities of the tribe to which he belongs. If the Jongu people remain as at present their total extinction as a separate tribe is only a matter of a few more generations. This, in view of their many admirable qualities,

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792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain
726 quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms,
727 and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

arf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
ood horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
f your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well
lso. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied
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hould be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken
arness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and
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"For killing gentlemen who possess a horse and five or
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"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

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the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu*. Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu*. This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house.

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs.

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours.

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses.

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even unknowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the 262 673 lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapōn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapōn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and 154 self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of [762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the [673] word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159
teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754
thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776]
Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did
this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it 682
within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673
own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma
Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his
wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her
house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753]
spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery:
hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black
and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a
very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage,
and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from
him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776]
people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot
help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she
dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then
be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this
old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's
father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was
believed that she always carried the poison on her person,
and for this reason he followed her to the fields and com-
pletely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was
shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor
says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the
same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly
hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take
his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the
story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father
searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really
does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old
woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Mandal makes up outstanding debts as far as he can out of his own property. 651

If through misfortune or poverty a man falls behind with his taxes the Mandal will advise him to collect materials for a feast. At this feast, called *hloang-ʒok*, the guests will contribute presents of money according to their ability, the money contributed being considered as an absolute gift, and not as a loan. In the last three years three people have thus been cleared of debt by voluntary contributions.

Actual crime takes up very little time. The only generally authenticated murder in the neighbourhood took place two centuries ago; but there are fairly constant rumours and suspicions of poisoning, and at least one instance of suspected foul play[7] which have to be cleared up. 674

In Lingthem an old widowed nun, Hlatam, the mother of Aga, is generally believed to possess a mysterious slow-acting 'poison,' which either she, or one of her ancestors, is said to have obtained from the Plains people. So strong was this suspicion that twenty years ago the Mandal had her seized while she was working in the fields; she was brought to the monastery where she was given a complete body search by some women, while the *youmi* and *gyapõn* ransacked her house: no trace of any poison was found, and after the accusation she prayed in the monastery, calling on the Gods to kill her if she possessed any poison. 754

Nevertheless the majority of the people of Lingthem still believe that she possesses poison. Chala Mandal says it is both a folly and a sin to call her a poisoner; there is no evidence of her murderous activities, there would be no advantage in her pursuing them and anyhow, where could she obtain the poison? Jiroong and one or two others agree with the Mandal, but the great majority take up the attitude that there is no smoke without fire, and some implicitly believe in her poisoning and are too frightened to take food or drink from her hands. Thus the lama Tafoor says that when he has to go to her house for a ceremony he makes it quite clear that he has come as a priest, and tells her that if he is ill subsequently everybody will know who to blame. Kurma believed that his second wife and her father were both killed by Hlatam; both died of stomach trouble which started almost immediately after receiving food from her, though death did not ensue till some months later.

This poison is considered to have partially natural and partially

[7] See Book Three. Chapter Fifteen pp. 402–403.

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scarf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
good horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
of your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well also. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied behind them, and they should be made to walk. Officers should be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken harness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and obliged to fly, they should not be reprimanded, but they should not be rewarded or receive any presents, even though the leader be a great man. The prisoners should receive what is necessary for subsistence, and also expenses for religious ceremonies, and men of rank should be treated well and with consideration.

"A man can only make a treaty for himself and his own descendants."

Concerning murder.

"The price for killing a gentleman who has 300 servants, 671
or a superintendent of a district, or a lama professor is 300 682
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gentlemen with 100 servants the fine is 200 oz. of gold.

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While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly

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159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopōn was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding 593 life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

837 After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's 762 elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re- 692 sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
●683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

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231 have a few pairs. All goats are fed on salt, and billy goats are also given maize. Kids, and other young animals, are never killed for food.

Pigs also are raised for eating and sacrifice, but their meat is more popular and a large number are kept. They are the only animals which are generally killed for domestic eating. They are fed on the remains of *chi* after the grain has been three times soused. It is not rare for pigs and piglets to get quite drunk on this diet; there is quite a heavy mortality among them, and also occasionally among goats, who take the food by mistake, through their falling down dead drunk. The pig would appear to be a variety of the Himalayan wild pig; it is a relatively thin black animal, covered with bristles. All boars are castrated at the age of three or four months, by which time, it is said, they will have been old enough to cover the sow once. There are two reasons for thus castrating the boars; if it is not done it is said they would become savage and wander away into the forest. But there is a greater danger than [838] this; if a man should happen to eat the flesh of an uncastrated pig he would thereupon commit sodomy. This is an example of the 811 notion of *tamtoom*, an extremely important major Lepcha idea; if two events are believed to be inevitably connected, though the actual causation of the second by the first is not obvious, the second event is said to be the *tamtoom* of the first. With our logical attitude to the external world we have no proper parallel to this notion; the nearest approach would be if our common superstitions were believed to be specific and ineluctable. If for example walking under a ladder were believed to produce, say, a financial loss, this loss would be the *tamtoom* of walking under a ladder. The two acts need not necessarily be performed by or happen to the same person; when pre-natal precautions and body-marks are discussed, it will be seen that the child often suffers the *tamtoom* of his parents' actions.

838 Sodomy is strongly anti-social—it is called *nam-toak*, an act producing a year of disaster, the term which is also applied to incest—and an extremely embarrassing subject, one of the very few people don't like discussing. There is one man in the village, Takneum *youmi*, who has twice sodomised people when he was drunk and the victim asleep. In the second case, which occurred recently, the victim was old Lharibu Chujen, himself a grandfather; he was not angry at the indignity offered and did not claim the [684] recompense of a pig and five rupees and ceremonial cleansing by a Mun to which he was entitled.

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754 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the
unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he
793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

● 684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/–. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman
[586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapōn* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

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671 that he will not commit such a crime again. Part of the fine
682 can be given towards the funeral expenses of the deceased."

Ordeal by oil.

671 "The oil must be supplied by the Government and must
695 be of the finest quality. It is boiled in a pan at least three inches deep. In the oil a black stone and a white stone are placed, of equal size and weight. He who has taken the oath must first wash his hands in water, in milk, and in widow's urine. His hand is then bound in a cloth and sealed. This is done a day or two before the ordeal, in order to give him a chance of confessing. The vessel with the boiling oil is then placed so that the stones cannot be seen, and he has to take one out. If he takes out the white one without any burn he wins his case. He who gets the black stone is sure to be burnt, and loses his case. Should he who gets the white stone be slightly burnt, it means that he has partially spoken the truth, and wins half his case."

Concerning adultery.

671 "For violating a woman of different position 3 oz. of gold
684 have to be paid to the woman's relations, and 4 gold srang to Government, besides many things in kind.

"For violation of a woman of the same position as the man 2 or 3 gold srang and several articles in kind must be paid.

"If the woman goes of her own accord to the man he has only to pay 1 gold srang and three kinds of articles.

"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

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159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[584] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves
[567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
[751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

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property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam. Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

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685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 756 793 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

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793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die. 685

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12] 627 [689]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:— [582]

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryuk mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

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636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 692 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his Absence on state business.

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754 has been smeared with blood and arrow-poison, and inscribed with
793 the victim's name and a spell written in Tibetan characters (the spell itself is believed to be in Burmese). This is put into a bamboo *patyoot* and is then offered to a man-eating devil, together with *cherkem*, consisting of grain floating in *chi* and blood, and other offerings. When the sorcerer is apprised of the arrival of the devil, either by a dream or by seeing him in reality he says to it 'So and so is my enemy, and I give his flesh to you to eat'; after that the bamboo is buried near one of the devil's houses. To make a person ill a quite simple ceremony is performed inside the monastery.

Tafoor, who told me about these rituals, is one of the three lamas of the neighbourhood who know how to perform them; the other two are the two Dorjé Lapoon, who received the knowledge from learned Tibetan lamas. Tafoor has never practised himself, and is not sure if the first Dorjé Lapoon ever did, but his uncle, the second Dorjé Lapoon, who taught him, has killed two people by sorcery. The first was when he was a student; a man came to his teacher and asked him to sorcerise somebody for him, and the teacher told his pupil to try his hand. The second instance was many years later, when his knife was stolen at a monastery feast; the thief, though he did not know it at the time, was one of the second Dorjé Lapoon's young pupils; the pupil did not know that the sorcery had been started against him or he could have averted it by returning the knife; only after his death, three months later, was his identity known and the lost knife recovered.

Nowadays the second Dorjé Lapoon refuses to perform sorcery any longer. The Maharajah has issued stringent orders forbidding the practice, and he himself, when on pilgrimage to Kathmandhu, made a vow not to indulge further in such wicked acts. Some time ago both Tafoor and Takneum *youmi* had cardamum fruit stolen and asked the second Dorjé Lapoon to sorcerise the thieves; but he replied that it was wicked to kill a man and that thieves should be dealt with by the police. According to lamaist ethics, it is a sin to kill a man by sorcery, but not a grievous sin if the lama afterwards
[688] helps his victim's soul to heaven. To kill a man with weapons is a far greater sin; for every person's body is the home of a hundred small gods called Tamba Rigya, and they are destroyed with the body.

About eighteen years ago the husband of Pumri—now the wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon, but at that time his uncle's wife—had a goat stolen; he found some of the stolen meat and brought

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person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15. 765 [688]

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the 765 152

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(*h*) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [688] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techü-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

782 demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving
776 and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the
[773] tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grand-
children, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act.
Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner
[688] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart.
But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears,
gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of
good things. If we do not know how to act in the right
manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be
angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased
always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God,
the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god,
Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures,
perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the
rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of
abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[539] 62a. to pong sa lung tän rong köb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
döm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön ga tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin köb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top cho. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la söm d,u chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la sum kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog döm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dö do niu nyu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die. 685

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;[11] his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.[12] 627 [689]

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy Gett'r *moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

[11] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392–393.

[12] The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner are the following:— [582]

(1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
(2) *Doum git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
(3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
(4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
(5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, ● 692 but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business. 000

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as 624 *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is 693 eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays 651 five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one 655 rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent [177] innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

671 that he will not commit such a crime again. Part of the fine
682 can be given towards the funeral expenses of the deceased."

Ordeal by oil.

671 "The oil must be supplied by the Government and must
695 be of the finest quality. It is boiled in a pan at least three inches deep. In the oil a black stone and a white stone are placed, of equal size and weight. He who has taken the oath must first wash his hands in water, in milk, and in widow's urine. His hand is then bound in a cloth and sealed. This is done a day or two before the ordeal, in order to give him a chance of confessing. The vessel with the boiling oil is then placed so that the stones cannot be seen, and he has to take one out. If he takes out the white one without any burn he wins his case. He who gets the black stone is sure to be burnt, and loses his case. Should he who gets the white stone be slightly burnt, it means that he has partially spoken the truth, and wins half his case."

Concerning adultery.

671 "For violating a woman of different position 3 oz. of gold
684 have to be paid to the woman's relations, and 4 gold srang to Government, besides many things in kind.

"For violation of a woman of the same position as the man 2 or 3 gold srang and several articles in kind must be paid.

"If the woman goes of her own accord to the man he has only to pay 1 gold srang and three kinds of articles.

"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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carrying the younger to slavery, and killing on the march such captives as are unable to proceed. Many enlist at [702] Dorjiling, which the Lepchas never do; and the rajah of Nepal employs them in his army, where, however, they seldom obtain promotion, this being reserved for soldiers of Hindoo tribes. Latterly Jung Bahadur levied a force of 6000 of them, who were cantoned at Katmandoo, where the cholera breaking out, carried off some hundreds, causing many families who dreaded conscription to flock to Dorjiling. Their habits are so similar to those of the Lepchas, that they constantly intermarry. They mourn, burn, and bury their dead, raising a mound over the corpse, erecting a headstone, and surrounding the grave with a little paling of sticks; they then scatter eggs and pebbles over the ground. In these offices the Bijooa of the Lepchas is employed, but the Limboo has also priests of his own, called "Phedangbos," who belong to rather a higher order than the Bijooas. They officiate at marriages, when a cock is put into the bridegroom's hands, and a hen into those of the bride; the Phedangbo then cuts off the birds' heads, when the blood is caught on a plantain leaf, and runs into pools from which omens are drawn. At death, guns are fired, to announce to the gods the departure of the spirit; of these there are many, having one supreme head, and to them offerings and sacrifices are made. They do not believe in metempsychosis.

The Limboo language is totally different from the Lepcha, with less of the *z* in it, and more labials and palatals, hence more pleasing. Its affinities I do not know; it has [312] no peculiar written character, the Lepcha or Nagri being used. Dr. Campbell, from whom I have derived most of my information respecting these people, was informed,*

* See "Dorjiling Guide," p. 89. Calcutta, 1845.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the 366 335 house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

352 There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. 354 The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the 415 cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and 323 I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was 261 told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked 353 against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing, is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for [721] pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

[312] Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in 251 copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. 415 These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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533

ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*

●721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
[illegible] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 This dance differs from all others of the sort I have seen
●721 in that the performers, except for the figures of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, are not masked. It consists of an almost continuous slow circling round and round, with a great deal of sword-brandishing; more like the sort of thing one sees at a military tournament, except that the performers are all dressed in elaborate costumes of Chinese silks of various bright and highly contrasting colours.

The warriors formed up in two long lines as each of the two gods made its first entry from behind the dark brown curtains which covered the front of the monastery, after which the slow circling was again resumed. Both Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala did a rather dull *pas seul*, which went on much too long; it, too, consisted of the same slow circling, without any variation in the step. After a time each god gradually danced nearer and nearer the monastery entrance and finally disappeared within. The whole performance appeared to be without either beginning or end, and there seemed to be no reason why it should have ever finished. It was an attractive spectacle for the first twenty minutes or so, perhaps because of the brightly-coloured dresses, after which it quickly became intensely boring owing to the entire lack of variety. The music was provided by drums, cymbals, and clarionets and consisted of the *O mani peme hum* tune which we got to know so well in Lingtem, with the addition of indiscriminate undertones played on the long ten-foot monastery trumpets. I think the tune is more pleasing, however, when sung unaccompanied, as it always was by the Inebus in Lingtem.

The dance ended with the circumambulation of the monastery by all the performers, including the two horses which are dedicated to the service of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, and never ridden from the day they are born. They were plumed and draped in thick Chinese brocades and looked most impressive; but considerable efforts on the part of their grooms were necessary before they could be persuaded to take their part in the formal procession.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

431 practically the only present I could give was money, which is not of very great use to them. I had frequent tussles with them on the
123 subject of payment for medical services; I insisted that medicine should not be paid for; they considered that it was shameful to take something for nothing and I frequently had to bully people with bad sores, which I knew I could cure easily, to come up for treatment; they were unwilling to do so because they thought they had nothing suitable to give as presents, and they were ashamed to take something for nothing. An interesting sidelight on their attitude towards gift-giving and strangers is shown by the behaviour of two of the bigger households who on my first arrival refused to sell to the servants either eggs or milk; and later when they got to know us used to come with presents of these commodities for which they refused to accept any return payment except after long argument.

123 When the Lepchas got to know me well they were not at all shy of asking for things; but except for cigarettes, betel nut and iodine or dressings for small cuts they always offered something in return for whatever they asked for and were in no way offended if their requests were refused. They were particularly attracted by illustrated papers and asked frequently to be given them; to a certain extent they recognised very clearly the objects portrayed in drawings and photographs, though their explanations to one another of the situations depicted were, as might well be imagined, very peculiar. I got far more amusement out of hearing three Lepchas explaining to one another what the pictures in *Punch* were about than I ever got out of reading that paper. One or two people asked for
● [726] pictures of special subjects; Rigya kept on asking for pictures of war because 'he was amazed at them and had never seen or thought of anything like it'; Chudo liked pictures of cars and fashionable life, for he had spent nearly a year in Gangtok as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchens and knew about the lives of Europeans and was able to explain them to his less fortunate compatriots. For him European life consisted chiefly in extremely formal and uncomfortable meals at which there was never enough to eat, interspersed with quarrels of an extremely dramatic nature. In one of the numbers of the *Illustrated London News* there were several reproductions of Chinese Buddhist frescoes and there was quite a competition to possess these among the older and more pious lamas. After I had had some photos enlarged and had shown people their photos I was bombarded with requests for photos of individuals

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain
726 quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms,
727 and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain
726 quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms,
727 and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

carf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
good horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
of your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well also. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied behind them, and they should be made to walk. Officers should be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken harness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and obliged to fly, they should not be reprimanded, but they should not be rewarded or receive any presents, even though the leader be a great man. The prisoners should receive what is necessary for subsistence, and also expenses for religious ceremonies, and men of rank should be treated well and with consideration.

"A man can only make a treaty for himself and his own descendants."

Concerning murder.

"The price for killing a gentleman who has 300 servants, 671
or a superintendent of a district, or a lama professor, is 300 682
to 400 gold srang. For full lamas, Government officers, and 554
gentlemen with 100 servants the fine is 200 oz. of gold.

"For killing gentlemen who possess a horse and five or six servants, or working lamas the fine is 145 to 150 oz. of gold.

"For killing men with no rank, old lamas, or personal servants the fine is 80 oz. of gold.

"For killing common people and for villagers the price is 30 to 40 oz. of gold.

"For killing a man who has done good work for Government the fine is 50 to 70 oz. of gold.

"For killing unmarried men, servants, and butchers the price is 30 gold srang; and for killing blacksmiths and beggars, 10 to 20 oz. of gold.

"On the price being paid a letter must be written and a 671
copy given to each party saying that everything has been 682
settled. If a case is reopened a fine must be paid by him who opens the case. The murderer must write to the effect

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164 Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas 842 call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained ●731 dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

842 Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

163 Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-165 seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that

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A child should know who are his *num-neu-ʒong*, that is those 835
people with whom all sexual contact is prohibited, by the time he is nine or ten. By the time he is twelve or thirteen a boy should also know those women whom he is permitted to sleep with—usually a very much smaller number than those who are forbidden. In the case of those relations of a generation above his own—that is to say, the wives of his father's 'elder brothers', he also has to know which of these women his father has slept with beforehand, for in that case the potential partner becomes permanently forbidden. Thus for example, Chimpet can never sleep with nor inherit his 'aunt' Mrs. Datoop (Tafoor calls Datoop 'elder brother' although they are actually three generations away from a common ancestor) because several years ago his father slept with her. Since sexual relationships outside the prohibited degrees are not considered embarrassing or important, no unpleasant or guilt-ridden situation arises through the father having to inform his son about his earlier sexual life. Such subjects are rather a matter for joking, but it would be a disaster if, through ignorance, the son cut short the family line.

iv.

Owing to the wide application of the incest ban it often happens 582
that a boy or girl has not a single potential spouse or unmarried love-partner in the same village; and consequently in the far greater number of cases a boy's wife has to be sought from a distant village, and a girl has to leave her home far behind when she goes to her husband. Of the sixty married women in Lingthem all but thirteen were from outside; and of these thirteen four had married newcomers to the village.[4] The remaining nine were either representatives of small *ptso*, or else their husbands were.

Lepchas make their first marriage extremely young. In Lingthem there was only one girl over fourteen unbetrothed, and that was Prumtu, who had a bad squint, was reputed to be lazy, and had a rough and unpleasing character. Eight boys over sixteen [732] ●
were unbetrothed; they were the two carpenters,[5] three mental defectives who will never be married, and three orphans. These orphans were Satéo, who was very badly lame and without property

[4] For a full list of married women and their place of origin see Appendix I, 2, Table II.

[5] See Chapter Four, p. 121.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions. 787 [732]

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest. 793

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects. [556]

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the 781 787

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Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

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reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was 858
tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son;
but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son
finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem
who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who [732]
is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha 855
the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being
treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a 858
rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *asék*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

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Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)
Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[facing p. 368]

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all three saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the kanya and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.' 159X 556

ii

An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls. 159X 732 [828]

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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does not do his share of the work; he leaves immediately he has got what he wanted. He is unsettled and unco-operative; there is nothing good to be said of him, and no excuses to be made for him, for he does not attempt to do as much as he could. It is said that he suffers from genital infantilism and fimosis; if he wanted to marry he would not be able to find a wife, but he does not want to. Since his parents' death he lives with his uncle, Thyak Thimbu; but he finds him very unsatisfactory for he is always going away.

This instability and wandering are also the chief symptoms of Asang's idiot son and Kanden. Since I saw quite a lot of Kanden and very little of the other I propose to describe Kanden; the medical histories of the two young men are almost identical.

Kanden was born in 1912, the middle of three brothers, but the elder boy died in infancy. When Kanden was about two years old his mother died and his father ran away with another woman; for five years Kanden was brought up by his 'aunt', Lumba's first wife. According to his father and to all the neighbours, Kanden was quite a normal boy as a child and up to the age of thirteen; until that age he was a good and sensible boy and worked properly and well. When his horoscope was cast at birth it was found that he was the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama, but when he went to Lumba to study he could not learn and got duller and duller until he was forced to give up the study. From that time he has suffered from wandering fits; sometimes just as he is going to eat he will get up without saying a word and go away for three, five, or seven days. During these fits he does not speak; and it seems as though he recognises nobody. He just wanders about sleeping and eating anywhere. Were he to steal or do anything wrong his parents would be held responsible, but in point of fact he does not do so. This state is caused by a supernatural called Kyon-rek; no exorcism is efficacious; the boy will get worse and worse till he dies an early death. There is no general reason for boys getting into this state (according to Tafoor, in Kanden's case it is the result of going against his destiny to be a lama); in a large (extended) family there is likely to be one wanderer. Besides Asang's son Dunbi's younger brother, now dead, was also a wanderer.

Most of the statements about Kanden given above were made by his father. Some weeks after I had got this information Kanden came up to gather firewood in company with Chimpet and I had a talk with him. It was not in any way a formal interview; we were all sitting together on the stones outside the monastery; there were

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betel nut and cigarettes provided. Chimpet did a great deal of the talking; he was always a rather irrepressible little boy, and on this occasion he was bubbling over with jokes and dirty remarks more than usual. A great number of the remarks made by Kanden arose out of Chimpet's statements. My interpreter was present, but everybody was completely used to him by that time. A lot of the talk was fairly meaningless jokes; I asked Kanden the type questions which it was known I asked everybody; what his earliest memories were; who his relations were and if he liked them; what his first sexual experience was; what his ambition was; what private property he had; whether he had heard or seen devils. I was particularly trying to find out about his wanderings and led the conversation back to them whenever I could without stressing the point. The only subject I tried to elaborate were his relations with Pichi, after he had emphatically stated that he preferred him to anybody else. I was very anxious not to frighten him and therefore did not ask any searching questions or insist on any subject for which he showed distaste. As far as I could judge the atmosphere was friendly and indeed frivolous.

Since I know of no other record of a primitive mental defective I propose to insert *verbatim* the notes which I made immediately after the interview, in order that, if possible, other people may be able to make a diagnosis.

'April 30th. Kanden came up to gather firewood this morning and I was able to talk to him for a couple of hours. He is twenty-five, heavy featured, and thick-lipped with rather more black hairs on the legs than the other Lepchas of his age. He sits on the whole very still, gesturing with one arm from the elbow, except when he is embarrassed, when he fidgets with a twig on the ground. He is of obviously low vitality.

'On the whole he speaks quite rationally; he can answer questions about relationship and so on consequentially. He speaks slowly and is rather liable to drop his voice to a confidential whisper. He has rather a foolish laugh and never laughed spontaneously, but when anybody else did he joined in a good deal. Chimpet was present, usually making obscene remarks which Kanden thought funny. Chimpet is more than ten years his junior, but he treated him as if they were of an age, whispering to him after he had gone away for a little "Did you kill a bird?" and reproving him as *tané* when he confessed to having had sexual experience.

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'Kanden knows his own story apparently from telling, for he says he has no memory of the time before he was about Chimpet's age. His mother died when he was about two and he was taken and looked after by Lumba, who is a sort of maternal uncle and who at that time had no sons. When he was big enough to carry a water bamboo (that is about five) his father ran away to Darjeeling. Dadool, his younger brother, was looked after by his father's elder brother, now dead, and his wife. When his father returned—that is when the boy was about ten—he took him back. A couple of years after that he went to an old *omzet*, now dead, to study to be a lama;[8] but he had to give it up as he had no time to study—there was all the *work* in the house and the fields. He would have liked to have learnt.

'Shortly after this his compulsive wanderings began. He would suddenly feel that he did not like his parents and that he had got to go away to *work* for others. He would go to somebody else's house—usually a relation—Songpo is an "uncle" and the Mandal's third wife an "elder sister"—and help them in their *work*, staying two, three, five or seven days before returning home. When he was a young boy his father used to send him to help his relations with their *work* and sometimes he used to feel he had to go home. He speaks with embarrassment and some giggling of these wanderings and in a low voice, but he answers quite sensibly. The feeling comes over him irresistibly; it is not accompanied by any sense delusions. He knows his parents and so on, but does not, then, want to have anything to do with them. He "just thinks he wants to go and help others with their *work*. As long as he helps others with their *work* others will help him. He goes to their house and it becomes late and he stops there."

'He is happiest of all working in the fields or gathering firewood or in the house. The happiest time of his life was as a boy. He does not want to get older and die. He is not married, does not want to marry, has never seen a woman he would like to marry, has never copulated, and never gets erections.[9] At marriages and feasts boys and girls get together and copulate, but he never does nor has done. As a boy he used to talk and joke with the girls but never anything more.

'He does not like his stepmother; she feeds him all right and

[8] His father said his teacher was Lumba: I do not know who is correct.

[9] Datoop says that Kanden did sleep with Asang's wife, but she now won't have him, and nobody else likes him as he is a fool.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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does not hit him but she scolds; not only him but also his brother and father. He not only does not like her as well as his real mother (whom he obviously never knew) but prefers Lumba's first wife. Indeed he does not like women at all; when he helps people with their *work* he always helps men, usually either old men or boys. His great friend whom he calls *ingʒong* is Pichi, the son of Datoop; he loves him very much, more than his brother. I do not think, however, there is any question of a homosexual attachment here; he says they never put their arms round one another's shoulders; and when I asked if he thought it would be nice, since they were both unmarried, to set up house together and live alone, he replied without enthusiasm that (*a*) The parents would not allow it, and (*b*) Pichi would refuse. They just help one another in their *work*.[10]

'He never wanders far, he says, nor goes into the forest. He just goes to other people's houses to help them.

'He has never seen a devil, but has heard some and been frightened. These devils are Ingbong *moong* and Numeen *moong* who cry like babies and Bamoo *moong* who cries like an old woman and is a sort of banshee predicting death. He heard her once crying by a stream one day when he was lying at home in bed. He has also heard Zombu *moong* which is the devil which causes death, and which can be heard on the day of burial and also on the anniversary of the death. None of these devils have ever spoken. He has also dreamt of lamas and bejewelled women who indicate the presence of Lungzi-chen *moong*. There is nothing in any way exceptional about hearing these devils; many others have said they have heard them and Chimpet said he had heard and been frightened of Zombu *moong*.

'He says he has two or three oxen and two or three pigs as his own private property, but his parents look after them and feed them. He buys his own clothes out of the produce of his own cardamum fields. I could not make out whether the rice terraces near the Mandal's house belonged to him or to his parents; I think the latter. He speaks eagerly of work in the fields. The dry rice is sown, but so far neither the millet nor wet rice. He gives all his money and goods to his parents; if he were married he would have separate property, but as things are he has nothing separate or secret from his father. He is fond of his father, likes him better than Lumba.

[10] Pichi said later that he and Kanden are no longer friends; they used to live near each other and work together; now he is no longer friendly with him. Pichi also said that when he is not wandering he is a good worker.

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x 159 ‘He would like to be wealthy and have lots of good food and clothes. He thinks he would like to go to live at Gangtok where he
732 has been three or four or five times. (Numbers always confuse him; in any question demanding a numerical answer he always gives a number of alternatives—an exaggeration of a cultural trait.)

‘The first time he wandered away he went to his uncle Songpo; he “thought he would be angry if he did not go and help them with their *work*.” He still thinks that he has to go and help people or they will be angry.

‘When he asked Chimpet if he had killed a bird he first of all denied having done so himself and then said that he had killed no big animal but has caught birds in snares. He showed little interest in this; did not care if the birds were caught alive or dead; apparently of no emotional importance.

‘All through the interview—I reverted to the subject of his wanderings several times, but never stressed it—there came up the obsessive connection between wandering and helping others with their *work*. “I go away to help others clean the ground and sow and then it gets dark and I stay there. As long as I help others others will help me.” His aversion to sex also came up several times. It is worth noting that Kanden exceptionally had no *oongop* to educate him sexually. It is possible that such a relation might have quieted his fear of women. Of course there are a number of women with whom he had a theoretical right to sleep, but none who were in a position to make a direct approach.’

x 159 I have given this interview at such length because it seems to me
732 to raise a problem of particular interest. As far as I can tell from this interview with Kanden, from casual contacts with Asang's idiot
158 son, and from the description of other wanderers given by Lepchas, there would appear to be considerable parallels between the Lepcha wanderers and the schizophrenics of our own culture. The parallels between ‘wandering’ and schizophrenia appear to me to be the following: the symptoms nearly always declare themselves in the second decade of life, after an apparently normal childhood; there are some physical abnormalities—the excess of body hair and a certain thickening of the features; there is the low or absent sexual impulse; there is the relative immobility and the very confidential voice. On the other hand what is for the Lepchas the most significant feature of all is the motiveless wandering, which has more obvious resemblance to a compulsion neurosis than to schizophrenia.

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Also there do not seem to be any hallucinations (the hearing of devils cannot be so classified, as it is part of the expected behaviour of every child), nor, save during the wandering fits, any change of emotional attitude towards the members of the immediate family. 159x 732 158

It seems to me possible that the forms of insanity clinically recognised are culturally determined; and in that case the state of affairs which in Occidental societies would produce either schizophrenia or compulsion neurosis, among the Lepchas produces the various syndromes of which the wandering is the most obvious feature. In the case of Kanden it is noteworthy that the cultural stress on co-operation has produced what would appear to be a feeling of neurotic anxiety so strong that it interferes with the individual's proper performance of his own work. This suggestion of the cultural determination of the symptoms of insanity is inevitably completely tentative, since I know of no other records of definitely abnormal types in non-European cultures.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in his adopted parents' house, and finally ran away. Besides his aggressive characteristics Kurma shared with Tempa a tendency to boastful lying in an attempt to give himself greater importance than he possessed, and a desire for money for its own sake. Kurma was also unique among the adult Lepchas in getting obviously drunk. 157 159x [733]

The foreigners, the people not born in Zongu, are the most obviously disturbing elements. Tempa and his sister, Mrs. Jiroong,[3] caused more trouble than all the other inhabitants of Lingthem put together. In his earlier years, too, the first Dorjé Lapoon, who is half Tibetan, caused a very great deal of disturbance.[4]

Owing to the very late psychological maturing of the Lepchas it is difficult to speak with confidence of the characters of most of the men under thirty and of most of the women under twenty. Except where there was strongly marked deviance, such as in the cases of Chélé, and the two girls Prumtu and Kondé,[5] the younger people lived psychologically so much under the shadow of their elders that it was impossible to foresee how they would act when they were independent.

Mrs. Datoop and Lumba's first wife were both rather more independent than the Lepcha ideal type of woman calls for. Lumba's first wife insisted on living in a field-house because, although she got on well with her co-wife and step-children, she disliked living in a crowd and having to bend her wishes to the majority. Mrs. Datoop almost openly ruled her husband and her household; she was far more business-like and managing and practical than is necessary for a Lepcha woman. These qualities, however, did not bring her into conflict with the other Lepchas, for they were developed along lines congruent with the Lepcha culture; her excessive qualities were for the Lepchas good qualities and she held a high place in the general esteem. In a culture in which the temperament rôles of men and women are violently contrasted she would have been severely maladjusted, for she was almost the most 'virile' person (in the Occidental sense of the word) in Lingthem.

Mrs. Tafoor was rather more actively unhappy, for she was a woman of fairly violent temper and aggressively sexed; she was in the unfortunate position of a person who liked a quarrel and who could find nobody to quarrel with. Tafoor used to tease her

[3] See Chapter Five, pp. 140–142.

[4] See Chapter Sixteen, pp. 416–420.

[5] For Chélé see Chapter Six, pp. 164–165; for Prumtu, Chapter Eleven, p. 311; for Kondé, Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

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"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have 157
had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink [733] ●
has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous 241
and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The 574
fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the 735
Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 539 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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ii

The office of Mandal is hereditary, within the Lepcha meaning of the term; that is to say that the title resides in the extended family, and when the holder dies or becomes feeble through old age, it is given to the next most suitable male in the family; it often is the holder's eldest son, but may equally well be a younger brother or nephew of the holder. The position is probably older than the Tibetan colonisation of Sikkim, for some of the Mandals of Zongu are the eleventh or twelth of the family line to hold the position. In Lingthem Chala Mandal, the present holder of the title, is the third of his line to hold office; he has been Mandal for twenty years, succeeding his father's younger brother Tasso Nungyen, who in his turn had succeeded his own eldest brother Ogen. Before Ogen the office had been in old Serving's family; but Serving's father Pépo was exceedingly stupid and the only other suitable member of the family was already a lama attached to Talung monastery; therefore the title was taken from his line (the Tsel-telim *ptso*) and transferred to Chala Mandal's (Jam-yong *ptso*). The Tsel-telim *ptso* was originally by far the most powerful in the neighbourhood, but is now almost extinct, owing, it is said, to the *tamtoom* resulting from one ancestor who sold Lepchas as slaves to the Bhutanese. 622

The Mandal is normally spoken of as the 'landlord' of the village, and the other householders are called his 'tenants.' The Mandal holds the land under the Maharajah, who is the ultimate owner; the householders have the usufruct of the land but cannot transfer it outside their family without the Mandal's consent; for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village the permission of the Court is also necessary. The Mandal is responsible to the Court for the maintenance of good order in the village and for the collection of taxes; if there is a deficit he is liable to have to make it up. In relation to the other villagers he stands in the position of an elder relative—father or uncle or elder brother; he arranges the marriages of most of the young people, he looks after everybody's welfare and happiness, giving advice on personal or agricultural matters where they appear needed, and acting as intermediary between the villagers and the Court. It is necessary for the Mandal to be slightly richer than his 'tenants'; he has to entertain all distinguished visitors; he has to look after the orphaned and homeless (Chala Mandal had permanently living in [423] [651] [584] [574] 622 736

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622 his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower
[736] from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tamtoom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

[431 177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

[For general protective ceremonial, usually taking place in the spring and autumn, see also category 796.]

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Quite A Number

291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a
[177] feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the
biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only
worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the
richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama
—a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the
waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave
all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother
to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy
clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect,
to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs
of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial
trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very
few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—
it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some
sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not,
and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine
to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there.
[75] Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their
clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting;
children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the
Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is con-
siderably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other
subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is
less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer
the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not
appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside
world has modified the character or habits of these people in any
way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people
of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through
the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively
rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to
cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settle-
ments are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

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the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu*. Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu*. This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house. 342 [751]

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs. 356

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours. 356 673

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses. 356

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

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774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a
[751] snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[6]
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[6] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

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and ends up dressed in white with a bow and arrow. This is 755
believed to fool the devil, as is the device of taking a new name for a year.

Some of the sacrificial objects are elaborate and expensive and demand several hours and a great deal of material to make. All the [779]
rituals are described in various sacred books, and when making the sacrificial objects these books are always consulted.

I think the nearest parallel to the attitude of the Lepchas towards 751
lamaist and Mun ceremonies can be found in that of an ignorant and somewhat hypochondriac European towards germs (the devils) and vitamins (the gods). There are a number of precautionary antiseptic measures to be taken against germs: salad is washed in disinfectant, food wrapped up in cellophane, children not kissed for fear of infection, the nose held when there is a bad smell from a drain, inoculations made against the fear of various diseases at regular intervals. Psychologically these precautions correspond almost exactly to the general and regular apotropaic services, either those held for the whole community or the obligatory consultations which have to take place at the beginning of each twelve-year cycle after the third. Once a germ has got a hold the disease has to be diagnosed and various remedies applied, for some of which you call in a doctor while others are traditional. These remedies correspond to the special services held in the case of illness or misfortune, the lama being rather regarded in the light of the consultant specialist and the Mun as the purveyor of old-world and traditional remedies. To keep in good health one has to follow certain rules about ventilation and sunlight and a correctly balanced diet. For the Lepchas these precepts are replaced by the worship of the gods. It is important to worship the gods and to have plenty of vitamins but to drive away devils and to get rid of germs is emotionally far more urgent and important. Though the other-worldly aims of lamaism are on the lips of some lamas they do not seem to me to be of great emotional importance; people say 'there are fewer devils here now that we have the lamas and their books' rather as they might say 'there is less diphtheria here now that we have got the new drainage system'. Though the lamas are considered to have driven away a number of the older devils an almost equally great number of new devils have been brought in following the arrival of Sikkimese and Nepali, as new diseases have arisen from new occupations and conditions of life to replace those which have been destroyed by a stricter application of hygiene.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree
751 or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

751
291
142
412
846

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776] the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751] ● does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164] arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805
combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [17] a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 751
Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755
compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper [531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is [578] between the two. This trouble has come from some other person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung*; *Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 If she lives until after November she will in
756 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[465] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[713] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced 751
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of 777
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [53]
of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.

[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
● [751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
776 in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud*- demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet. 755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*. 751 776 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are 755 778 171

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 78. – Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] 583 future father-in-law, the parties being often united before the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the 585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste, 581 [584] and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field, 462 [567] and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been [751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

X 159 *Amputation of 'ingʔong'.*

752 'At Lik I had an "*ingʔong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

X 159 When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife
839 of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur
[522] attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[158] [15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a [752] 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora.*

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.- Analyst]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Consequently the recognised
778 habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should
776 a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps
[782] burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter —so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and
● [753] his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

782 The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

778 There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular
782 lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To
753 these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the
614 customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

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some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those 224
who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. 178
The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food.

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start 224
hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and 868
also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would [753] develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest 224
game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap [834] is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth.

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu.

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15]

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
[753] bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown
842 herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

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performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the *ingzong* relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking. It is used in all ceremonies for which a blessing is invoked (as opposed to exorcisms), sometimes alone, sometimes with the *lafét*[12] sacrifice. It is always made privately in each household after the sowing of a field. It is the most solemn sacrament in Lepcha life. 756

When a Mun is called in to exorcise a devil the most usual situation is as follows. After the specific devil has been divined the Mun spends a night in his own home *munthen*-ing—that is summoning and communing with his possessing spirit—to discover the reason for that particular devil having attacked that particular person, and to learn what sacrifices or ritual are necessary to exorcise it. The question of causation is bound up with the conception of *tamtoom*—the necessary consequence of an earlier act; often this act was not committed by the sufferer, but by fairly remote ancestors. Thus the Mandal suffered from lumbago as the *tamtoom* of one of his ancestors having abandoned a baby in a field-house, where it was burnt to death. A complicating cause, which also accounted for his failure to produce a son, was that the spirit of his first dead wife was plaguing him because, although herself a Mun, she had been cremated and conducted to heaven by lamas (as though she were a nun) instead of being buried and led to a heaven by a Mun. Angered at this treatment her spirit had been transformed into Sabdok *moong* and in this guise came from the *rumlyang* from time to time to plague her husband and to prevent his having any sons. In this task she was assisted by the Hit *rum*, the Mun god who looks after the new-born dead.[13] 755 [753]

Such a *tamtoom* as this is almost impossible to lift but the Mandal did all in his power to persuade Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to lift the curse, making many sacrifices, and even summoning with many presents an old and widely famed Mun[14] from a village two days journey away. Before Gongyop started performing the

[12] See Chapter Two, p. 74.

[13] The Mun worship two supernaturals, Hit *rum* and Dé *rum*, who are considered to be ancestral gods who look after all dead Lepchas. Their positions and functions in the Mun eschatology will be more fully described in Chapter Thirteen.

[14] This man, besides being a Mun, was also a Pau and Yaba. Gongyop, who assisted in the sacrifice, said that he had heard he was a 'black' Mun—Mun-mook Mun—, but he was not able to form any opinion from the prayers he heard him say.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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selves will give a small present to the Mun who will sing for all of them. The grain which is used in this sacrifice has to be specially ripened in the sun in the same way as the grain for seed is ripened. This completes the ceremony of sowing and it is always followed by a feast in which meat is eaten.

The ceremony of harvesting is far more complicated. It is only employed for the dry rice. When the dry rice is ripe a little is picked to be prepared for *chi* and when the *chi* is ready the owner of the field summons all his friends and they go together to pick rice. Until the ceremony is completed nobody, not even children, may pick any grain or he would get ill; if anybody gets stomach-ache at that period people will say that he has picked rice before it was harvested.

[753]

It is necessary to have ready beforehand the smoke-dried *tafoot* of a pig. The *tafoot* would seem to be the gall-bladder or spleen; it is round and has a white smelly liquid inside and is found near the bladder, but in pigs and musk deer it is said to be found near the penis at the end. On the day of reaping this *tafoot* is taken up to the field of dry rice together with two burning brands from the house-fire and also a *patyoot* of *chi* made from the new rice. When the party arrives, a place in the centre of the field is chosen as the *ʒo-lam* (the place where the crops are heaped); some rice-plants in the centre of the *ʒo-lam* are tied together into a sheaf and then the two burning brands will be held above them and on these a piece of the *tafoot* will be put. Then an old and experienced man—not the owner of the field but any one of his workers—will be chosen to represent a man of Mayel (called for the ceremony Mayel-mu) and he will blow on the *tafoot* and speak; while this is done a special measuring basket is held upside down over the brand. The old man will summon the gods and the ancestors and will say 'Come and see the smoke; burr—burr—burr—burr'. Then all the people present will repeat, 'burr—burr—burr'. By this invocation it is hoped that the gods will come and bring back all the grain eaten by wild birds and animals.

Standing by the speaker is a woman not directly connected with the field owner, who has been chosen for the day to represent Talyeu-mu, one of the earth sisters. When Mayel-mu has finished his invocation the measuring basket is put on his back and Talyeu-mu cuts the tied grain and puts it in the basket. Then Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu, who acts as her load carrier, go round the *ʒo-lam* cutting a basket of rice for Talyeu-mu; at the same time

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

experience and a small knife. Babies are not slapped to make them 844
cry or take in air; they do so, it is said, automatically. Nothing is done to the mother's breasts to induce lactation. Considerable anxiety is felt, especially by the father, if the afterbirth is long in descending; if there is a delay the severed and tied navel-cord is attached to the mother's toe and she is then *pék* by a Mun. As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it and the cord are rammed into a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. Somebody not too nearly connected with the delivered parents will take this and either throw it into the river or fasten it high up on a tree out of the way of insects and animals; for should it be eaten the child will suffer from skin eruptions. Formerly the afterbirth used to be buried but now this is no longer done; for if it is buried in wet [753] ground the child will get eye disease, if in cultivated ground the crops will be spoilt. One or two people said that in certain family lines the afterbirth is still buried, but I could not get any concrete examples of this practice.

If after the birth the blood does not flow freely a blood clot will be formed; to remove the clot the mother is given hot soup and drinks, and fish boiled in butter; if the clot does not come down she will die.

If labour is difficult a fowl and a goat should be sacrificed; the mother must eat the fowl by herself. The goat's heart, lungs, and liver must be boiled and hashed and mixed with rice and offered to the gods and devils; the rest of the meat belongs to the officiants.

It is believed that with breach presentation it is impossible for the 845
baby to be born alive and it is rare that the mother should survive this; it is due to one of the parents having tied up a packet at one end to carry food and then, instead of taking the food out of the mouth, to have taken it out of the tied end. It is good if a new-born baby has hair, but should a child be born with a tooth in its head (a thing unheard of) that baby will be an incarnate devil. It will be reared, but when it grows up its thoughts and curses will be able to kill people. No cases are known of a child born in a caul; if it did occur it would be lucky. A child is unaffected by being born with a strangulating cord; it is the *tamtoom* of one of its parents having twisted a rope or string round their neck in the later stages of pregnancy. Birth-marks vary in their significance according to their place and colour. Big splodgy birth-marks show that in its former incarnation the child was a cow; red marks on the hands and arms that the child was formerly a killer of men—a soldier

853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them stand-
854 ing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

[753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a 159X girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted [833] one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived [837 826] husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him afrer he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the [753] presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on [428] his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 4

Origin of the Lepchas and Village Administration

773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
● [753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159
teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754
thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776]
Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did
this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682
within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673]
own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma
Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his
wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her
house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753]
spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery:
hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black
and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a
very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage,
and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from
him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776]
people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot
help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she
dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then
be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this
old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's
father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was
believed that she always carried the poison on her person,
and for this reason he followed her to the fields and com-
pletely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was
shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor
says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the
same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly
hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take
his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the
story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father
searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really
does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old
woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
●753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
● [753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed 539
that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil 171
of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is 755
believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be 753
used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum [214]
is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755
171

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ime as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own 843
house-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must not tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a bag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended from his shoulder happens to break he must on no account pick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills out. He must not eat animals which have met their death by accident, or which have been killed by some beast of prey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any kind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if he does so he must run away at once and let others deal with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap; nor touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is somewhat unexpected in a completely horseless community), or both the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by any chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period of his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by keeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826] child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period. If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [753] would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife. 848 595

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents. 848 [842]

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock. [553]

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry. [753]

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they
have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no
psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this
reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's
sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in
the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passion-
ate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of
restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry
if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his
wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you
should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about,
and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he
will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-
ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each
Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will
naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can
do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it
will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one
another and in course of time will give up sleeping together.
It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is
to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the
woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother,
to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time,
and while the subject is not generally discussed among
brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if
asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

●753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zŏm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.
In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet
leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross,
usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a
face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped
over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white
one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross
is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very
long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a
horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men
are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led
by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and
held by the rider and the images in front. The rider
carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the
tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black
one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a
yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same
colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753] ●
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [793]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Ts-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-a*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those
● [753] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-s'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gol below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have
[622] developed any organized coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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192 [1]) loc. cit. 9.

[2]) *Ts-shi* is from *Ts* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tisk* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-ting*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Ts-she*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nung-lyan-no* and *Ka-f'ang-fi*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sée-fok*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with dense jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sikong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *Ro-lak* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor [177] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone. Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yak* or *Yak-mas* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tyol-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples.

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly [278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[783 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-ea-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it
are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[58]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293] wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

58. op. cit. p. 479.

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the Mandal makes up outstanding debts as far as he can out of his own property. 651

If through misfortune or poverty a man falls behind with his taxes the Mandal will advise him to collect materials for a feast. At this feast, called *hloang-ʒok*, the guests will contribute presents of money according to their ability, the money contributed being considered as an absolute gift, and not as a loan. In the last three years three people have thus been cleared of debt by voluntary contributions.

Actual crime takes up very little time. The only generally authenticated murder in the neighbourhood took place two centuries ago; but there are fairly constant rumours and suspicions of poisoning, and at least one instance of suspected foul play[7] which have to be cleared up. 674

In Lingthem an old widowed nun, Hlatam, the mother of Aga, is generally believed to possess a mysterious slow-acting 'poison,' which either she, or one of her ancestors, is said to have obtained from the Plains people. So strong was this suspicion that twenty years ago the Mandal had her seized while she was working in the fields; she was brought to the monastery where she was given a complete body search by some women, while the *youmi* and *gyapōn* ransacked her house: no trace of any poison was found, and after the accusation she prayed in the monastery, calling on the Gods to kill her if she possessed any poison. 754

Nevertheless the majority of the people of Lingthem still believe that she possesses poison. Chala Mandal says it is both a folly and a sin to call her a poisoner; there is no evidence of her murderous activities, there would be no advantage in her pursuing them and anyhow, where could she obtain the poison? Jiroong and one or two others agree with the Mandal, but the great majority take up the attitude that there is no smoke without fire, and some implicitly believe in her poisoning and are too frightened to take food or drink from her hands. Thus the lama Tafoor says that when he has to go to her house for a ceremony he makes it quite clear that he has come as a priest, and tells her that if he is ill subsequently everybody will know who to blame. Kurma believed that his second wife and her father were both killed by Hlatam; both died of stomach trouble which started almost immediately after receiving food from her, though death did not ensue till some months later.

This poison is considered to have partially natural and partially

[7] See Book Three. Chapter Fifteen pp. 402–403.

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754 supernatural qualities. The poison is meant to be a solid substance, but it does not act unless Hlatam has evil intentions towards the person to whom she gives it. Neither poison nor ill-will are sufficient by themselves; the combination of the two is necessary. The possession of this poison carries certain disadvantages; it cannot be got rid of, for then the supernatural attached to it would destroy the person who threw it away; and it is also necessary to employ it once ever so often or the supernatural will attack the possessor; if no external enemy is the victim it must be given to somebody in the owner's household.

Those who believe in the poison think that before she dies Hlatam will give the poison to her son Aga. If he were to proclaim her guilt during her life-time, people might trust him after her death; if however he says nothing they will fear him, even though he go through the gesture of throwing the poison into the water. Aga is almost the nastiest person in Lingthem; he has a squint and a sullen and leering expression, and is one of the few people on whom Lepchas are willing to pronounce moral judgements; two said of him vehemently that he was evil-minded. I considered him below average intelligence and somewhat malicious; it is possible that the universal fear and suspicion of his mother has rendered him surly and malevolent. Hlatam herself seemed a cheerful and rather bawdy-minded old lady, ever ready to joke; outside her own house people did not distinguish her in any way, but the majority said they were frightened to visit her and would not take food from her hands unless she tasted it first.

754 I personally do not believe in Hlatam's 'poisoning'; it reminds me of the accusation of Mary Baker Eddy that her third husband 152 was killed by 'arsenical poison mentally administered'.[8] At the same time it has seemed worth while to treat the subject fully for it is almost the only instance of suspected (and possibly repressed and transferred) aggression among the Lepchas. As will be seen later, all misfortunes, whatever their nature, are generally ascribed to the action of supernaturals, and even personal aggression is usually represented as being outside the aggressor's control. Hlatam has been converted into a sort of scape-goat; among Lepchas even motivated aggression is socially disapproved of; Hlatam is believed to exercise almost motiveless malevolence. In general theory her 'poison' is said to be useful for acquiring property and securing revenge; but in the case of her actual named victims there was no

[8] See *Mrs. Eddy* by E. F. Dakin. (London Scribner's 1929.) pp. 166–168, 227.

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property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's 754
family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam. 152
Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of
naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable [578]
psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of
unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, 685
if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

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685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of 756 getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are 793 considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

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754 has been smeared with blood and arrow-poison, and inscribed with the victim's name and a spell written in Tibetan characters (the spell 793 itself is believed to be in Burmese). This is put into a bamboo *patyoot* and is then offered to a man-eating devil, together with *cherkem*, consisting of grain floating in *chi* and blood, and other offerings. When the sorcerer is apprised of the arrival of the devil, either by a dream or by seeing him in reality he says to it 'So and so is my enemy, and I give his flesh to you to eat'; after that the bamboo is buried near one of the devil's houses. To make a person ill a quite simple ceremony is performed inside the monastery.

Tafoor, who told me about these rituals, is one of the three lamas of the neighbourhood who know how to perform them; the other two are the two Dorjé Lapoon, who received the knowledge from learned Tibetan lamas. Tafoor has never practised himself, and is not sure if the first Dorjé Lapoon ever did, but his uncle, the second Dorjé Lapoon, who taught him, has killed two people by sorcery. The first was when he was a student; a man came to his teacher and asked him to sorcerise somebody for him, and the teacher told his pupil to try his hand. The second instance was many years later, when his knife was stolen at a monastery feast; the thief, though he did not know it at the time, was one of the second Dorjé Lapoon's young pupils; the pupil did not know that the sorcery had been started against him or he could have averted it by returning the knife; only after his death, three months later, was his identity known and the lost knife recovered.

Nowadays the second Dorjé Lapoon refuses to perform sorcery any longer. The Maharajah has issued stringent orders forbidding the practice, and he himself, when on pilgrimage to Kathmandhu, made a vow not to indulge further in such wicked acts. Some time ago both Tafoor and Takneum *youmi* had cardamum fruit stolen and asked the second Dorjé Lapoon to sorcerise the thieves; but he replied that it was wicked to kill a man and that thieves should be dealt with by the police. According to lamaist ethics, it is a sin to kill a man by sorcery, but not a grievous sin if the lama afterwards [688] helps his victim's soul to heaven. To kill a man with weapons is a far greater sin; for every person's body is the home of a hundred small gods called Tamba Rigya, and they are destroyed with the body.

About eighteen years ago the husband of Pumri—now the wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon, but at that time his uncle's wife—had a goat stolen; he found some of the stolen meat and brought

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754 793 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/–. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman [586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapōn* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

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756 are men; of these three were first of all Padem. Kurma is Padem only; he can diagnose but can only perform a few sacrifices and exorcisms.

The other two groups of possessed priests resemble one another and differ from Mun and Padem in so far as neither can make sacrifices nor perform exorcisms, but can merely get possessed by supernaturals; they dance until the supernatural speaks through them and discloses its wants and whereabouts. Both wear special [292] clothes for their performances: the Yaba (women are called Yama) wear bandoliers of tinkling bells and have their clothes fringed with bells; they hold a metal plate and beat it as they dance. Pau (women are called Nandjému) wear elaborate wool head-dresses and dance with a skull-drum in one hand and a bell in the other. Both Yaba and Pau are and have been very rare because the possessing spirits are not Lepcha but have been introduced through intermarriage with foreign women, the Yaba spirit comes from Limbu women (the Limbu are a Nepali tribe) and the Pau from Sikkimese-Tibetans. There is a tradition that there is a similar spirit called Jhankri belonging to the Chetri,[2] but this spirit has never manifested itself among the Lepchas as there has been no inter-marriage between the two groups.

There is only one representative of this group in Lingthem: the 'elder grandmother' of Patek, an old woman over seventy, is a Nandjému. The service of these diviners is only called in when lama and Mun fail to agree on a diagnosis, or when there is reason to suppose that a new devil has taken up its abode in the neighbourhood. In such cases a Pau or Yaba, usually from another village, will be called in to discover its home and its needs.

●754 It is believed that there are two sorts of Mun, a good group called Tang-li Mun and a bad group called Mun-mook Mun; the 756 difference is similar to the traditional difference between white and black magicians. 'Mun-mook Mun are like thieves: they think and do evil and are possessed by devils which they employ for their own selfish ends; they alone can send devils (the term used for sorcery).' They are believed to have an influence like the evil

Pumri (wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon), the elder wife of Lumba *chithembu* (she is the daughter of Pumri and has the paternal spirit) the 'younger grandmother' of Patek, and the sister of Jiroong (the wife of Kaji). All four women practise.

[2] This Lepcha tradition is incorrect: the Chetri are a fairly pure Hindu tribe; the Jhankri occur among the Gurung.

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754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

X 159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls
[195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of
[152] falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervousness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

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X 159 My body ached so much that I could not move; I felt as though I were going to burst and all the time as if I was being poked with bones or sticks. Mother tried all the devils to appease them, uselessly; finally she saw that it was the Padem *rum* and she made a sacrifice of fish, bird, *chi*, a scarf and a rupee and a *chimi* and prayed "Nyou *rum*—god of our ancestors—do not harm my son; stay with him and help him and he will serve you." A month later I recovered and now I make sacrifice to the Padem twice a year.'

Birth of bastard sister.

Kurma's bastard sister, Nurzé, was born when he was seven or eight years old. The father was Pashet, but he refused to acknowledge her and his mother's brothers performed the *thip-song* ceremony. The baby was born with a big stomach and died at the age of five owing to the fact that Pashet had blown up a bladder when she was five months gone in the womb. Pot-belly and death is the inevitable *tamtoom* of this—death occuring in the year corresponding to the month of pregnancy at which this act is performed. Kurma thinks Pashet did this on purpose.

Death of Banyok. Kurma's first version.

Banyok was adopted by the Mandal,[8] who was, and is, without a son. The Mandal had some distant connections of the Aram Pandjet *ptso* called Kaloo and Tangdong who were jealous of the fact that the Mandal's property would go to the stranger although they had children themselves; therefore according to Kurma they gave Banyok poison in a dish of curds and buckwheat with the result that he died three months later in his mother's home. This poison was bought in the 'plains' in Darjeeling by Kaloo's grandfather; it is still in the possession of a relation, Shupak of Lungdeum.

X 159 After the death of the boy there was a general outcry that this woman Tangdong had poisoned him but she protested vehemently ● 754 against it. However, others persisted in their accusations and eventually a lama came from Talung monastery to make them

[8] Kurma maintained on several occasions that this was proper adoption, but both the Mandal and other people denied that this was so. It is probable that as a pauper the child was brought up in the Mandal's house in exchange for his work in the same way as Satéo is today.

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swear a solemn oath. This ceremony took place down by the river and Salyung of Panung was the sacrificer. An altar was erected and a goat killed and its blood collected into a cup; then the lama summoned by name three devils from Talung and offered them *cherkem*. Tangdong again denied administering the poison, but all the old men present insisted on her guilt. Then the lama touched her forehead with an incense burner and said 'If you have poison may all your *ptso* be destroyed by these demons.' Then a Mun sacrificed, calling on all the devils who were created by Itpomu and dedicated the goat to them and then said to the suspected poisoners 'If you have poison may you die as this goat dies.' Then he sprinkled blood and *chi* on the ground and said 'If you have poison may you and yours dry up as this blood dries up on the ground.' Then he gave them blood and *chi* to drink and said 'If you have poison may you and yours all die of an issue of blood from the nose and mouth.'

Since that date all the members of the *ptso* have died in this way; they have sores and their body is contracted in some sort of paralysis so that they crawl forward and double up and they have an issue of blood from their nose and mouth and then die. The only survivors are two lamas of whom Takal is one, and they perform annually the ceremony to keep off the devils, making an elaborate offering and explaining that they knew nothing of what had occurred at that time and were completely innocent; now that they have heard the story they are making these offerings. (*I did not believe this story at the time as I had already noted Kurma's constant preoccupation with violent death and the story seemed to me,* de facto, *improbable. I had already heard this story of the perjured poisoners, but as something which had taken place a good number of years ago and in another village. According to Tafoor over thirty years ago at Lungdeum when Tasso Nungyen was Mandal. I was rather unwell when Kurma told me this story and I left him in the middle of the morning; when I saw him about a week later I told him that I had been too unwell to write down what he had told me and asked him to tell me again. The second version is given below and is I think the true one. While he was telling his first version the greater part was overheard and confirmed by an old lama who made a speciality of making prayer-flags and by Mrs. Datoop; but they arrived after he had started and did not, I think, realise that Kurma was connecting the story of this ordeal with his own family; the story itself is one which is told very often.*)

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Death of Banyok. Kurma's second version.

Banyok died about [illegible]; Kurma's only memory of him is his being carried by his elder brother, Ahyok, when he was almost all skin and bone. The swearing ceremony was done about a year later and he, Kurma, didn't see it but only heard about it; the death of his brother was not the precipitating cause though he seems to think it was involved in it. The poisoner, Tangdong, lived in Lingthem at a place a little below the monastery where there are orange trees today.

Kurma's mother's second marriage.

Some time round about 1910 the Mandal and his wife (*first wife, now dead*) arranged a marriage between Kurma's mother and a lama, Chenyak. This man had already been married once, having inherited his elder brother's wife. Thus it occurred that both his wives had been beyond the age of child-bearing. The Mandal advised him to marry Kurma's mother and the Mandal's wife performed the same office for the woman; whereupon the Mandal acted as *bek-bu* for the *asék* which consisted of a pig, a hen, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee; which were divided among the villagers of Panung where Kurma's mother lived, as she had no surviving family in the neighbourhood. There had been a man, the son of Kurma's father's elder brother, who should theoretically have married her as *oong-op* but the man did not fancy taking on the responsibility of a large family of infants, and since they lived under different Mandals there was no method of coercing him.

After Kurma's mother and Chenyak were married they first lived at Lingthem and then at the demand of the people of Liklyang —the small village across the river—who wished for their services as Mun and lama they transferred to that place. First of all the husband and wife went across the river and cleared the ground and built a hut; then they fetched to live with them Ahyok, Ajeunmu, who was married shortly after, and Samboop. This occurred when Kurma was about fifteen. Ajeunmu was married to a man living farther up the river who three years after the marriage developed leprosy, of which disease he and the other seven people in the house subsequently died. This is the last recorded case of leprosy in the neighbourhood. Her son Takshyom who is now nineteen years old, is living with Kurma as he has no other living relations. It is said of him that he is a bastard by an unknown father, but this is

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159 teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754 thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776] Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682] within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's [673] own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753] spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery: hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage, and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776] people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was believed that she always carried the poison on her person, and for this reason he followed her to the fields and completely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old woman should be so maligned.

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While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

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CHAPTER 7

Exorcism and Other Magical Practices

754 IN the wild and mountainous forests of Sikkim "it is fitting," writes Mme. David-Neel, "that sorcery should hold sway. The so-called Buddhist population is practically Shamanist and a large number of mediums: Bönpos, Pawos, Bunting and Yabas of both sexes, even in the smallest hamlets, transmit the messages of gods, demons and the dead."

I have already made a number of scattered references to these people, and shall now try to disentangle the extremely muddled and conflicting Lepcha ideas concerning them.

756 In the first place, it seems clear that prior to the advent of Lamaism in Sikkim the only recourse the Lepchas had to their demons and gods was through the medium of *Mun* and *Padim*. According to the dictionary the former word means a "vagrant singing priest"; it can also be used to denote "an exorciser; or any experienced person." Padim, on the other hand, is given as "one unacquainted with religion and exorcism; or belonging to the laity"; but this meaning was not known in Lingtem. The difference between the two is not at all clear, nor are their powers strictly defined; but whereas both men and women may become Mun, it is impossible for a woman to be a Padim. The position seems to have some points in common with the Shamanism of Siberia; for whereas the Padim's god is male, that of the Mun is female. A Padim has power over certain demons only; but a Mun has power over all. From time to time a Mun becomes "possessed"; but a Padim never. A Padim receives no instruction in his duties; and such esoteric knowledge as he

751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf 793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

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nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling), nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa). All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neighbouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 294 a.b.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[776] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[778] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[781] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[77] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[764] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 230 sq.

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on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

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796 is the direction in which the devil has gone. Should the pointed end turn backwards, that is towards the thrower, it is a very bad omen; it means that quarrelling will take place in the succeeding year.

V

755 The exorcisms and apotropaic rites performed by lamas for the benefit of individuals are even more numerous and varied than the calendrical rites. There is scarcely an ill which man is heir to which has not its individual and appropriate ceremonial remedy. Like the calendrical ceremonies by far the greater number consist of making an image of the possessing devil, invoking it, worshipping it, and then destroying it.[8] Besides the image of the central devil there are always a number of minor ritual objects, the most important of which is a twisted piece of dough called *chongbu-tipkü*. At the end of the ceremony the sufferer, or, in some cases all present, have this piece of dough ceremonially waved over them (*pék*) by the officiating lama as a ritual cleansing. In the greater number of ceremonies this is the only rôle which the sufferer plays. He is often not even in the same room as the lamas. At the beginning of the service the devil is always erected facing the lamaist altar; when the ceremony is finished the model with its stand is turned round to face the house-door; a double line of flour is traced from the devil to the door as the route it must take to go out, and the image on its board is then carried away either into the forest or to the place where four roads meet. For some exorcisms those who carry the devil have to go through some ritual or be ceremonially purified before they are readmitted into the house.

In some of the exorcisms a dough image of the sufferer is made and offered to the devil in lieu of the body of the sufferer; and in others, especially when it is divined that the devil has been sent through human agency (usually unwittingly: evil or envious thoughts can unleash a devil without the responsibility of the thinker) the devil, in the form of a winged insect, is ritually killed by the lamas with their sacred dagger. Finally, in some apotropaic ceremonies the threatened person himself plays a rôle; thus, for the ceremony *doak-po doat* the sufferer has to progress through the smaller squares of a big magic square, gradually having all his appearance changed: he starts off dressed in black, carrying a stick,

[8] Outlines and descriptions of some lamaist ceremonies will be found in Chapter Thirteen and especially in Appendix III.

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nd ends up dressed in white with a bow and arrow. This is 755
elieved to fool the devil, as is the device of taking a new name for
year.

Some of the sacrificial objects are elaborate and expensive and
emand several hours and a great deal of material to make. All the [779]
tuals are described in various sacred books, and when making the
crificial objects these books are always consulted.

I think the nearest parallel to the attitude of the Lepchas towards 751
maist and Mun ceremonies can be found in that of an ignorant
nd somewhat hypochondriac European towards germs (the devils)
nd vitamins (the gods). There are a number of precautionary
ntiseptic measures to be taken against germs: salad is washed in
isinfectant, food wrapped up in cellophane, children not kissed for
ear of infection, the nose held when there is a bad smell from a
rain, inoculations made against the fear of various diseases at
egular intervals. Psychologically these precautions correspond
lmost exactly to the general and regular apotropaic services, either
hose held for the whole community or the obligatory consultations
which have to take place at the beginning of each twelve-year cycle
fter the third. Once a germ has got a hold the disease has to be
iagnosed and various remedies applied, for some of which you
all in a doctor while others are traditional. These remedies correpond to the special services held in the case of illness or misfortune,
he lama being rather regarded in the light of the consultant specialist
nd the Mun as the purveyor of old-world and traditional remedies.
To keep in good health one has to follow certain rules about
entilation and sunlight and a correctly balanced diet. For the
Lepchas these precepts are replaced by the worship of the gods.
t is important to worship the gods and to have plenty of vitamins
ut to drive away devils and to get rid of germs is emotionally far
nore urgent and important. Though the other-worldly aims of
amaism are on the lips of some lamas they do not seem to me
o be of great emotional importance; people say 'there are fewer
levils here now that we have the lamas and their books' rather
s they might say 'there is less diphtheria here now that we have
got the new drainage system'. Though the lamas are considered
o have driven away a number of the older devils an almost equally
great number of new devils have been brought in following the
arrival of Sikkimese and Nepali, as new diseases have arisen from
new occupations and conditions of life to replace those which
have been destroyed by a stricter application of hygiene.

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755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child [855] is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

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858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

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performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the *ingzong* relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking. It is used in all ceremonies for which a blessing is invoked (as opposed to exorcisms), sometimes alone, sometimes with the *lafét*[12] sacrifice. It is always made privately in each household after the sowing of a field. It is the most solemn sacrament in Lepcha life. 756

When a Mun is called in to exorcise a devil the most usual situation is as follows. After the specific devil has been divined the Mun spends a night in his own home *munthen*-ing—that is summoning and communing with his possessing spirit—to discover the reason for that particular devil having attacked that particular person, and to learn what sacrifices or ritual are necessary to exorcise it. The question of causation is bound up with the conception of *tamtoom*—the necessary consequence of an earlier act; often this act was not committed by the sufferer, but by fairly remote ancestors. Thus the Mandal suffered from lumbago as the *tamtoom* of one of his ancestors having abandoned a baby in a field-house, where it was burnt to death. A complicating cause, which also accounted for his failure to produce a son, was that the spirit of his first dead wife was plaguing him because, although herself a Mun, she had been cremated and conducted to heaven by lamas (as though she were a nun) instead of being buried and led to a heaven by a Mun. Angered at this treatment her spirit had been transformed into Sabdok *moong* and in this guise came from the *rumlyang* from time to time to plague her husband and to prevent his having any sons. In this task she was assisted by the Hit *rum*, the Mun god who looks after the new-born dead.[13] 755 [753]

Such a *tamtoom* as this is almost impossible to lift but the Mandal did all in his power to persuade Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to lift the curse, making many sacrifices, and even summoning with many presents an old and widely famed Mun[14] from a village two days journey away. Before Gongyop started performing the

[12] See Chapter Two, p. 74.

[13] The Mun worship two supernaturals, Hit *rum* and Dé *rum*, who are considered to be ancestral gods who look after all dead Lepchas. Their positions and functions in the Mun eschatology will be more fully described in Chapter Thirteen.

[14] This man, besides being a Mun, was also a Pau and Yaba. Gongyop, who assisted in the sacrifice, said that he had heard he was a 'black' Mun—Mun-mook Mun—, but he was not able to form any opinion from the prayers he heard him say.

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755 more customary part of the invocation he told me this story of the reasons of the dead wife's anger with, for him, considerable gusto; it is possibly rather comforting to know that the neglect of the religion of which you are the priest is the cause for such elaborate ceremonies.

When the Mun has discovered as much as possible about the supernatural and immediate causes of the illness he indicates the necessary objects of sacrifice. These are almost always animals, but on occasion other objects are needed as well or instead. Sometimes these objects are valuables, which are just displayed to gratify the supernatural; sometimes other edibles—crops, *chi*, dried bird, dried fish, ginger. According to the ceremony these are either abandoned to be eaten by wild animals, or consumed, as part of the ritual, by all present except the Mun himself.

When animals are sacrificed they are first offered alive to all the supernaturals, including those specially involved; then they are slaughtered by some layman and divided up. Parts of the intestines —the lungs, liver and heart—called the *sha-fot* are singed or cooked with rice and chopped up and thrown to the devils, and the head, one fore-leg, and one hind-leg (these portions are called *gazook*) are laid out and dedicated to the devil specially involved. After the dedication the meat is eaten; it is often the Mun's fee but he does not always take it all. The Mun intones prayers both before and after the animal is killed; the praying may take four hours, and is usually not attended to by the other people present. In daylight ceremonies, when the weather is fine, the Mun often withdraws a little distance from the house in order to pray without disturbing or disturbance.

This relatively simple sacrifice is usually performed when there is a parallel exorcism being performed at the same time by lamas; for some other devils, particularly those with which lamas cannot deal in any way, much more elaborate ceremonies are necessary. It is impossible to generalise about these exorcisms as one can about the lamaist ones, for they have no apparent common principle. I have therefore selected three 'prescriptions' out of the considerable number I have witnessed or heard about, as samples; in their different aspects they embody the greater number of motives in elaborate Mun ritual.

(1) *To get rid of Sor moong* (*violent death*) *or Apang moong* (*genito-urinary diseases*). A goat is tethered by a long rope which has three knots tied in its length; first of all, all the members of the

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afflicted household must touch the knots and then the Mun; then the Mun will call on all the devils to be contented with the blood of the sacrifice and not to take the patient, after which he throws the rope into the air; if the rope falls end outwards (i.e. the end away from the goat falls towards the door) it means the devils will be satisfied; if it falls towards the house the prognosis is bad. After this the animal is killed and the *gaʒook* and *sha-fot* offered to the devil with a plate and a pot filled with rice, a rupee and a ceremonial scarf, together with some of the invalid's ornaments and clothing (these last are only offered symbolically) and also a cup of *chi* with different grains in it. Then the Mun constructs a phallus out of wood, which is called in its guardian function *moong long tik*; this is set up between two stones leaning slightly forward, somewhere in the forest, and anointed with the blood of the slain animal and *chi*; this will keep the devil away, for no devil can pass this guardian.

(2) *To drive away the ghost of a dead child, called Num-een moong, which kills young children by infantile diarrhoea.* After an animal has been sacrificed the person who is troubled by the *moong* goes down to a narrow stream; the troubled person stands on the right of the stream and the Mun on the left of it. Then a 'gateway' is made over the stream of two bundles of elephant grass and brambles; and the Mun holds in each hand a bundle made out of wild raspberries, nettles and all other thorny and prickly plants. These bundles are dipped in water and *pék* over the sufferer several times; then a bamboo *chi* holder filled with blood and *chi* and shut up at both ends, and a leaf filled with fried rice and meat and blood are *pék* over the patient and thrown through the gateway for the devil; then the bunches of thorny plants are thrown through the gateway and finally the gateway is filled up with thorny plants 'so that it looks like a tree'. The Mun does this at two other places some way apart on the stream; he must do these second two—one above and one below the original one—alone, and after completing them he must return straight to his own house without meeting anybody; should he meet people Num-een *moong* will start haunting them.

Num-een *moong* is the devil released by the death of young children under the age of about ten; this devil pursues living people and especially other children; older people who die do not let loose a devil. The Num-een *moong* persists for about three years after the child's death; when there are bad storms the devil can be heard hooting 'Oo-oo-oo.' Children are particularly

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755 frightened of this devil and a great number of Lepchas claim to have heard it cry.

755 762 (3) *To get rid of Chyom moong (that is the devil who causes people to die by falling from a tree or cliff) or Rot moong (that is the devil who causes people to commit suicide).* This ceremony is called Moong Sot, killing the devil, and should be performed by the surviving members of the family in which one member has either died violently or committed suicide. It *should* be performed every three years, but it is sufficient if the ceremony is done after the violent death and at the birth of each new member of the household. If the ceremony is not performed the devil will return and claim another victim.

A dead goat is skinned except for its legs below the joint and is lain on its back with its hind quarters towards the bowman. Beside it is a hole already dug and above it is made a small shelter of bamboos thatched with reeds. Beyond that is set up a red head of banana flower stuck into the ground and against it a post on top of which is attached the goat's heart, in such a way that the blood drips on the banana flower. In a line with this stands a bowman with an arrow in his bow ready to shoot. The Mun is at one side not looking at the post. The other men who are present are all armed with knives.

After a time the Mun starts shivering uncontrollably and summons the devil in a loud voice. As he calls some insect or other will climb up the pole towards the heart, and the bowman must shoot it with his arrow before it reaches it. As soon as he has shot he must call to the Mun to say whether he has hit or missed the insect; if he has missed the Mun must recall it. When the insect is killed it and the goat are chopped to pieces by the bystanders with their knives and buried in the prepared hole; stones and earth are rammed on top of the sacrifice to fill up the hole, and then a second time to make a little mound.

Padem can offer *sakyou faat* and can generally perform some of the simpler exorcisms; there is no general limitation of their power to deal with different devils; it depends entirely on their individual knowledge and capacity. On the whole Padem cannot deal with the more dangerous devils, nor sacrifice animals more important than a chicken or, in a few instances, a goat. The most general form of offering for Padem is the *rum*—the basket filled with various containers. Yaba and Pau, as has been said, can make no sacrifices but can only indicate what sacrifices other priests should make.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 642 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

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Gebu *faat* (a Mun ceremony of throwing a *thomu*—lump of dough—to see which way the end points) should be performed. 787

Corpse. The corpse should be buried; it would be bad for it to be burnt.[4]

[4] Note by Tafoor: 'If the corpse were a lama's it would be burnt just the same.'

On the corpse must be put a paper inscribed with 'Parrko sin chagyou'. The corpse must not be shown to others. Since the corpse is an old man the door of death is open; if it had been a child the door would have been closed.

Mariwâ Gumurr. Sandé *moong* is living in a red milch cow. The ceremony Onchook Tsoo Deurr must be done and also Yông Kook (this is three *pong-ring* with *deu*, etc.). He died at sunrise. To the south there are many devils. To the north there is a man with big earrings, or else a mole on his ear or nose and with curly hair and a red dress, whose name is Num; the devil has gone to him.

Sahor Tachen—Stars. The devil who caused death followed a woman from the north-east. Therefore on the corpse should be a paper stamped with a horse from the *lokor* (the 12-year cycle).

Corpse carriers should be Horse or Snake year.

Removal of corpse. The corpse should be taken out of the south-east corner of the house.

. . . . . .

Notes: When Sandé *moong* is driven away ceremoniously on the third day the bag in which the devil resides should be taken with the offering and left for two days—after which it can be re-taken into use. All apparent contradictions are explained by being cumulative or by being contingent.

(*d*) Lama's Divination for Illness

May 1st. Chano came this morning to consult Tafoor about his wife, born in *beu nam* Snake year (1905), who was ill, and also his youngest daughter, who was born in *kik nam* Fowl year (1931) and was suffering from stomach ache. Taking their dates of birth and the present date as his data, Tafoor worked out the following diagnosis of the causes of their illnesses and the measures to be taken to cure them. The explanations were added afterwards 787 755

Wife. The drawing of the first diagram showed that the illness was caused by Sabdok Loo *moong*, by Dadé *moong* (other names Nanjet *moong* and Tomoong Deut *moong*: it is an evil spirit sent by an enemy), and from Tamsi *moong*.[1]

[1] Tamsi *moong* is the *moong* who causes quarrelling and wars. To keep away quarrels and kill this *moong* a piece of paper is stamped with the printed effigy of the *moong* and surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks. Lamas then sit around this paper holding in their joined hands a *phoorbu*—a sort of sacred dagger, which has three heads on the handle and a piece of black cloth tied round the middle. They summon the devil in a sing-song voice with partly closed eyes: the devil comes in the form of an insect on to the paper when it is killed with the *phoorbu*. When the insect is killed it and the paper are put into a rat's skull,

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round which twelve *sutsong*—pieces of wood pointed at both ends and with a notch in the middle—one end being red and the other black—are tied, and the whole is buried where two roads meet, being well rammed down and a stone set on top of it.

Then from the first diagram, consulting the sacred book he learned the following additional facts. The patient will dream of a red ox.[2]

[2] This dream is automatic; if the patient says she has had no such dream it will be because she doesn't remember it; it is in the book.

People in her house mustn't buy blue cloth, or goats or oxen, and must not sit near a big tree. She must not eat the flesh of a red ox or of carrion. If she will survive to the month of Chupu, i.e. November—she will recover. She is troubled by the Hlamen Djémé *rum*, and he has already taken her soul inside his[3] walls. It is necessary to perform the ceremony of Deut Shagu Kyok.[4]

[3] This is a supernatural equivalent to the Mun *rum*, half-way between gods and demons, of an ambivalent nature, a god when pleased a devil when angry. Between here and heaven it has a gaol where it keeps the souls of men captive until bribed by offerings to let them go.

[4] For this ceremony a small image of the invalid made out of buckwheat powder is required. On the board are also *yé*, leaf cups with grain in, arrows and spindles; gold and silver is scraped over it. *Chimi* are lit, books read, the patient *pék* with *chongbu zipkū* and the offering removed far away.

The illness has been caused through considerable enmity and jealousy.[5]

[5] Karo *moong* is released automatically, through evil thoughts, if you are annoyed with a person because his animals have strayed into your field or because you think he has done you harm, or even because you envy his possessions. The pestering by Karo *moong* is not the result of malice, and though through divination you try to find out who has released it no sort of revenge is taken. To cure its symptoms lamas will burn incense and a Mun will offer an ox and *pék* the patient. If, after having thought evilly of a person you repent and wish to withdraw Karo *moong* you light a number of *chimi* and perform the ceremony of Kongso Klon; chanting and beating drums either in the dark or at your house (must be done by a lama). Karo *moong* doesn't kill.

If the patient herself doesn't die somebody else is liable to. The smell of high meat is insufferable to her. She is very restless. Chimbu Klon and Dumbu Soong must be done at once.[6]

[6] Chimbu Klon—to give a feast without getting any contributions from the guests. The feast must include meat.

Gyapchi klon (this is the same as Dumbu Soong). Five images are made (*a*) Sher *moong*, white, (*b*) Lho *moong*, yellow, (*c*) Deut *moong*, red, (*d*) Chyong *moong*, indigo, (*e*) Mamoo Takloong, black, represented as a woman sitting with spread legs and open vulva. Round these are arranged in circles 100 *chayd* for (*a*) 100 heaps of rice for (*b*), 100 *chimi* for (*c*), 100 *nakhut*—i.e. pieces of dough stamped with the figures of a man and a woman—for (*d*), and 100 *chongbu zipkū* for (*e*). There must also be 100 *zuzsok*—earth copies of *chosu*. The lama officiating at this ceremony must be given five rupees.

If the invalid had not become ill she would have been very prosperous,

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[532]

CHANO CONSULTS TAFOOR ABOUT HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS

Above: Tafoor casts a horoscope in the monastery porch.

Below: The devils to be exorcised. Deut *moong*, Mamoo *moong*, Lho *moong*. They are about 25 cms. high, made out of coloured buckwheat powder on stands of banana stem.

[Facing p. 472]

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787 755 with lots of food and clothes and animals. As it is she is very bad; her soul has already one leg outside the body. It is the evil thoughts of others who have caused her malady. The Deut Shagu Kyok ceremony must be done at once.

Her husband Chano was born in Oon *nam* (Sheep year), and their years are antagonistic. They are liable to be troubled by Chemen *moong*, Loo Desen *moong*, Mukong Rum Loo, Sabdong *moong*.

The patient will dream of an old and decrepit house, and of a stream. She will vomit. She must not wear a black hat or put on black paint or buy anything black. For a year she should not take food from a relation except those living in the house.[7]

[7] The *moong* possessing her will be hungry and will try to get food. So that when it sees people giving the patient food it will attach itself to them in the hopes of getting more. This holds good for a year. It does not apply to people living in the same house.

A lama must read the following books: Tinchu Bekeu, Numjeu Cheré, Pungoor Luboong, Chétop Chachu. He must also make the following *deu*—Chemen Gédo, Lumoo Gédo—and set them up on a path. Chano must also get the ceremony Loo-fat performed by a Nandjému, and the ceremonies Goonchen and Séné Kyop by lamas. The wife must change her name.[8]

[8] This refers to the name she is usually known by, not her book-name. The new name can be given by anyone, and after that the old name must not be used. If the old name was meaningful, there is no tabu on the name in other contexts. The old name can be resumed after a year.

The rat skull (see 1) must be carried far by her nephew and buried deeply. A *Mazeu tsop* (image of the invalid) (4) must be made. There will be many quarrels in the house if the fine-seeming mischief-making advice and scandal of others is listened to and then Gébu Tabrong Pano[9] will be angry, and will

[9] Quarrels affect this deity as if they were a burning chilli (i.e. irritating smoke).

send all sorts of aches and pains, starting with toothache, as a punishment, and they will continue for some time. The Tyouma Rumso[10] ceremony

[10] This consists of dancing round a cloth and knife-scabbard with a knife in the hand, and also burning *lapsong*—that is incense with crops, *chi* and butter, and scraping gold, silver, brass, copper, iron, turquoise, coral, and conch-shell over the incense. It is the same as Da-floh.

must be performed and also Kongso Klon (chasing devils).

Baby. The baby will be seriously ill. A small image must be made of it and the invalid's hat and coat put with it and it must be taken far away. When taken out of the house the head must not face towards the sunset as trouble will come from there. It should be taken out facing Chyom (south). It is necessary for the ceremonies to be done very carefully as the mother's soul has already got one foot outside the body.

For the baby's health the father should not go anywhere where there has been quarrelling or where corpses have been burned, or where there are people of low degree like blacksmiths and musicians. The baby is troubled by

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787 Maknyam *moong*[11] and will get pains as though the body were pierced, and pains

755 [761]

[11] This is the devil which causes death. It acts rather like a vampire; those people whom it kills become in turn Maknyam *moong*. Consequently it is in a way the evil ghost of one's ancestors—since they died by Maknyam *moong* and became it in their turn. At one time it used to be visible; but the *sanyoul koong* (tree) which grew in the mountains was cut down and barred its way; now the devil's body can no longer come out, merely its soul.

Maknyam *moong* runs in every family, but some families also suffer from Arot maknyam *moong*—the devil which causes violent deaths. Such a family is that of Kaji's (late) first wife. One of her brothers recently fell from a tree; a pregnant woman in the family was crushed by a falling tree.

in the heart and left shoulder, and shortness of breath. The parents should not buy red or white cloth, or bows and arrows, or any sort of animal from other people, or eat the flesh of carrion or drink rock or rain water. Should it survive till the fifth day of Choobu the crisis will be then. Care should be taken not to let it play with knives and other dangerous instruments. The following sacred books should be read: Numchya Chu, Tukzung Chosung, Nangsa Nanget, Dorjé Chu, etc. The Dafloh dance should be performed, incense burned, and holy *nyü* water sprinkled. The Tsatsoh Kyop (stamped *choten*) ceremony should be performed, and also Tsinmu Faat. The child should wear a yellow cloth. Some iron, the head of a chicken and the head of a monkey (? skulls) should be made into a bundle and put on the *hingkoor* (house altar).

For some time there will be many quarrels and general bad temper. (*Aside*: perhaps the baby has been shaken up inside.) All its life long the child will be in danger of death, and that is equally true of its mother. (I think this means that both are threatened by hostile supernaturals, and constant care is needed to ward them off.) Hlamen Djémé (this is the ambivalent supernatural, the god of the Mun, god or demon according as to whether it is pleased or angry) will plague the patient much. The Deut *moong* which is in the house plagues it as severely as if it were the child's mother. The Deut Shagu Kyop (4) ceremony must be performed at once.

The gods and devils are quarrelling over the child's body; should the devils win the child will die. Therefore the ceremonies must be done very properly. The child must avoid water out of rocks or from puddles. Had it not been ill everything it set hand to—trade, crops, animals—would prosper; it would have a life covered with flowers. But (figuratively speaking) a prayer-flag is tottering and must be set upright. Some covetousness (perhaps from a childless woman) has caused the trouble. The child is always in a hurry, inattentive to its parents. Its soul has been taken by Gongbu[12] and Mamoo Deut Tsen[13]

[12] This devil causes swelled stomach. To cure get an ox's horn and fill with rice seed; the lama will hold this and pray silently, and then *pük* the patient and give him some seeds. Butter, meat and *taki* must be mixed and set fire to, and taken outside.

[13] This is a trinity of supernaturals, consisting of the female Mamoo who is indigo, Deut *moong* who is white and Tsen *moong* who is red.

will give trouble. Maknyam *moong* (11) is in the house, and also a devil Badé which was sent in the time of the father or grandfather. Now the gods are angry and Daphlo should be performed. The child is constantly dreaming of human

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corpses; it either has, or will, excreted and brought up blood. It has no appetite. First the gods were angry, now the *moong* are. The ceremony Yongkeuk Gedo Klon [14] must be performed and Sunen (same as Tamsi, 1) and the taking

[14] This is a ceremony for the material prosperity of the worshipper. A milking pot surrounded with a rope is set up, and on the left side is put a cup of strained *chi*, with four *sakyou*, dabs of butter. Lamas read their books and there is a constantly recurring phrase 'Yago Chakook Sho'; whenever that recurs the bystanders shout 'Ya'.

away of the image of the child *ing kup leu ryuk* (4). Also a red *yeu* Tsendeu Gedo must be made. When the image is taken away the head must not face towards the hills; trouble comes from there. The child's chief trouble will be cough.

N.B. When the Dafloh is danced in laymen's houses a Mun will kill an ox at the same time.

. . . . . .

Although Chano is a lama he can perform none of these ceremonies for himself, and must pay for consultations, etc., as much as a layman would. Tafoor says he has to give his heart to the work—because all the supernaturals are hidden in a huge house—but he finds everything from the books. If he relied on inspiration he might make mistakes. It is very similar to systematic astrology or card-reading, the varying permutations of years and signs being practically inexhaustible.

. . . . . .

(e) Performance of Indicated Ceremonies

On May 9th the ceremonies indicated by Tafoor's exorcism were performed. The various lamaist ceremonials were telescoped into one—*Gyapchi klon*—by the addition of such other items as were indicated for the expulsion of the other devils, without introducing contradictory elements. Thus, using the notes in the previous horoscope (1) was not performed as Tamsi *moong* was not the chief operative devil; (4) was super-imposed on (6) *gyapchi klon*; (10) the Tyou-ma rum-so or Dafloh dance was performed at the end of the ceremony; and Yong keuk gédo klon, a minor ceremony, was postponed. The most important thing was that Hlamen Djémé *rum* had been recognised by Gongyop as being in fact the Mun spirit; and therefore Mrs. Chano was to be dedicated to the Mun god and to receive instruction from Gongyop as her teacher. Consequently there were as usual a simultaneous Mun and lamaist ceremony; the Mun ceremony conducted by Gongyop is called ABOONG AK (opening the mouth) or RUM KEUK (acknowledging the god); the lamaist ceremony conducted by Tafoor can be conveniently referred to as GYAPCHI KLON.

Preparatory to *gyapchi klon* Chano had prepared a large quantity of ground millet powder and ground buckwheat powder, and the trunk of a banana tree was cut up into segments to serve as stands for the images to be made. Sifted earth was also collected, as well as a hundred leaves; in the morning rice was cooked,

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Tafoor arrived early in the morning to start the making of sacrificial objects; he brought with him as *kané* and assistant his wife's brother the son of Lharibu Chujen of Panung; Chano also helped in the making of the objects. The first objects to be made were the images of the devils, each about ten inches high (see photograph) and placed on a three-inch stand of banana stalk. These images were made out of buckwheat flour mixed with water; they were moulded by hand, and the details marked with a blunt piece of wood; they were left to dry slightly before the coluring matter was added. The four male devils were identical; they are portrayed standing; Chyong *moong* was coloured green, Deut *moong* red, Lho *moong* yellow and Sher *moong* white. Mamoo *moong* the female supernatural was portrayed sitting down with her legs apart; the breasts and pubic hair were greatly exaggerated, and also the vulva which was coloured red, the rest of the image being black. After this the image of the house-owner was set up in the centre of an enamelled plate (this is a quite conventional image of buckwheat powder about eight inches high); round the foot of this were grouped discs impressed with the conventional butter image of husband and wife (stamped from the wooden printing block from the monastery) about two inches high and around that again twelve smaller discs stamped with the effigies of the twelve years. These elaborate images took about five hours to prepare, between eight in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon.

About one o'clock the ox was dedicated by Gongyop (see below); after the dedication it was killed by Chinya and then cut up by Chala Mandal, who was dressed in very old clothes and was covered with blood at the end. The head, one fore-leg and one hind-leg and the intestines were reserved for the ceremony of ABOONG AK; the rest of the meat was divided up amongst those present. During the course of the afternoon the following people arrived, most of them accompanied by their wives and families: Chinya (Chano's 'brother'), Chudo (Tafoor's brother), Thyak Thimbu (Gongyop's brother), Tempa, Aga (Chano's 'brother'), Chala Mandal, Adér (Chano's 'grandfather') and Rigya. As they arrived they were presented with a *patyoot of chi* and sat down in the kitchen to gossip and eat; nobody paid any attention to the ceremonies. The wife, in whose intention the ceremonies were being performed, wandered around rather listlessly. The cooking was being supervised by Mrs. Chinya, and Chano welcomed the guests; but Tempa, who was no relation, tried to act as if he was the host, particularly towards ourselves.

Meanwhile in the *dé-ang* Tafoor and his assistant were continuing the fabrication of the sacrificial objects; four *gyachu dri* were made; these consist of a small rectangular obelisk of dough mounted on a slice of banana stalk with four hollows scooped out of the four sides; these are for the worship of Sercho Gébu *pasa*, the king of the east. Flags of coloured paper were prepared for these mounted on splinters of bamboo; these flags—*dak*—are rectangular, with a triangle cut out of the far narrow side.

Then the smaller objects were prepared; one hundred of each of the four smaller objects had to be made; they were made roughly and quickly, but a great deal of difficulty arose in deciding if enough objects had been made. They were arranged in groups of twenty to make counting easier but even so there was great uncertainty, and at one moment Tafoor, who had remained perfectly calm and peaceful the whole time exclaimed "I am as angry as a

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GONGYOP DEDICATES MRS. CHANO TO THE MUN GOD

Above: Valuables and other objects on a 'plate' on an open-air altar.

Below: Gongyop offers to the gods and devils the cooked intestines of the sacrificial ox with rice. His wife is beside him.

[facing p. 476]

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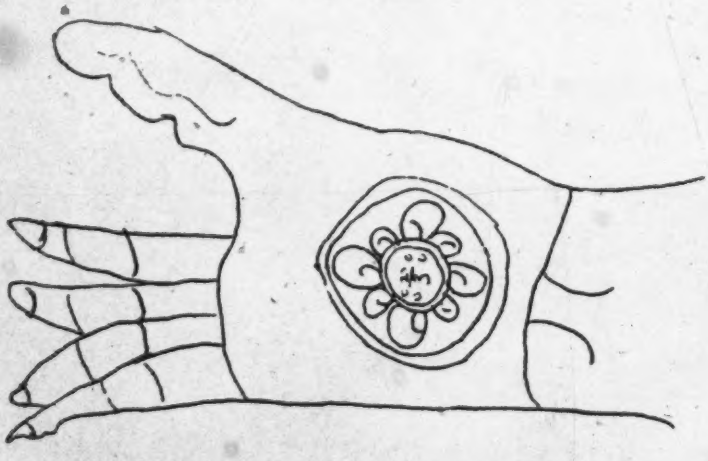
155 standing penis.' Eventually all the small objects were made; they consisted of (*a*) 100 *choten* of earth—small barrows about three inches by one made by stamping damp earth in a mould; (*b*) 100 *chaɣé*—buckwheat flour rolled into a double cone joined at the base with a smear of white butter on each tip; (*c*) 100 *nahleut*—dough discs stamped with the 'husband and wife' die in butter; (*d*) 100 *chongbu tipkü*—twisted strips of dough which were fastened into bundles of five each. Dusk was falling by the time all the objects had been completed; they had taken two men the better part of twelve hours to make. Small boys had been sent to Gongyop's house to fetch 100 *chimi* (altar lights) which he was lending for the occasion, and to the Mandal's house to fetch a small brass image of the god Chumdendé (a Buddha-like figure) and its cloth panoply.

When everything had been prepared the floor of the *dé-ong* was swept and



covered with a clean mat. Then on this in chalk Tafoor drew very swiftly a rather odd hand (see accompanying illustration) which represents the hand of Buddha; the design in the centre represents a mountain surrounded by sea sorrounded by four big and four small worlds again surrounded by sea. On top of this design was put a basket filled with grain with a rupee at the bottom; on this basket was put the plate with the representation of the house-owner. Then around this in a square were arranged (1) the *choten*, (2) the *chaɣé* dedicated to Sher *moong*, (3) the lighted *chimi* dedicated to Deut *moong*, (4) the *nahleut* for Chyong *moong*, (5) the bundles of *chongbu tipkü* dedicated to Mamoo *moong*, (6) the *gyachen diɣi* were placed in each corner, with a lighted *chimi* before each; into the top of these, and also into the image of the house-owner were stuck *dado* in the following colours starting from the left and facing the house altar:

blue white
black
red yellow

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755 (7) In a line with these were placed one hundred heaps of cooked rice on banana leaves dedicated to Lho *moong*. These offerings covered the palm of the hand and were about six feet square.

On the drawn fingers were placed two tables, the higher one to the back; on the lower table was (starting from the left) a *chaẓé* (a big heap of dough), three dishes of water, two dishes of uncooked rice and a big *chimi* (these offerings are for the gods to wash, etc.). On the higher back table were placed (also starting from the left and facing the house altar) Sher *moong*, Lho *moong*, Deut *moong*, Chyong *moong*, Mamoo *moong*. Into the back of each image was stuck a *yé*—a diamond of thread on bamboo supports—of the same colour as the image; into the image of the house-owner was stuck a *yé* (the *yé* represents the supernatural's palace) of all five colours; the six images also had stuck on each side of the *yé* a *tam-sing*, a pointed wooden label inscribed with the supernatural's name in Tibetan, and a *pong*, a thin piece of bamboo with small tufts of white wool down its length which represent the clouds around the supernatural's palace. Finally a large tripod made from three bamboos was lashed so as to centralise over the image of the house-owner; the top above the lashing was stuffed with a cloth and on that was placed the metal image of Chumdendé. Directly above it, suspended from the bamboo ceiling was the canopy of red, white and blue cloth, looking rather like a bird-cage.

By the time the offering was completely erected it was quite dark, but the *dé-ong* was bright with the hundred and more altar lights, and Tafoor had a small oil lamp to read by. After he had arranged everything he put on his lama's coat—he had taken it off and worked in his shirt and drawers—and sat down cross-legged against the altar. In front of him was the gong, and by him Chimpet to hold the light and beat the gong when necessary. By his side was the *kané* with the 'clarionet'. The ceremony consisted of invoking each demon in turn by the reading of the appropriate scripture and the playing of music, and mollifying it by worshipping it as a god and showing the offerings and then dismissing it. For the five devils this took about two hours. Tafoor chanted in the usual lamaist tones. Tempa and Kurma (who arrived rather late) and Chano looked in from time to time, but everybody else stopped in the kitchen, lit by a big smoking wood fire, eating and drinking and gossiping. When the reading from the scriptures was finished, Chano, his wife and children were called in and *pék* by Tafoor with one of the bundles of *chongbu-tipkü*. Then the six images were turned round so as to face the house-door; a narrow path of two lines of flour was traced from them to the door which was then opened; a couple of minutes' silence were allowed for the devils to depart satisfied; and then the images were carried away by the unrelated young men present, while others held torches to illuminate them; the images were thrown away at a fixed spot in the forest.

Tafoor and his helpers went into the kitchen for food—they had been constantly provided with *chi*. Subsequently the offering was demolished, the earth thrown away, and the rice and objects made out of dough eaten by the guests and especially the children; neither the officiating lamas nor the people in whose intention the offering was made may ever eat the sacrificial objects, but other people may without supernatural danger. The basket filled with grain with a rupee inside was given to the *kané*; Tafoor received Rs. 5 or the equivalent in grain.

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MUN CEREMONIAL—ABOONG AK

In the early afternoon Gongyop dedicated a live ox to the Mun god and also arranged on an open-air altar—*chom*—made of two bamboos laid on a bush (see illustration) the following offering. On a brass plate were placed three *chimi*, three heaps of uncooked rice with a stick smeared with butter set into the centre of each, a scarf and a rupee, a scrap of new cloth (it had been begged from a tailor) and Mrs. Chano's necklaces and jewels. The permanent part of this offering was only displayed to gratify the supernaturals, and would be taken back into use the next day. These were all dedicated to the Mun god by Gongyop, who in a long prayer asked the god to accept the offerings and spare the life of the sufferer, who would in recompense devote her life to his service. The ox was then killed and cut up, during which time Gongyop *munthen* called on the gods in meditation. A small portion of the intestines were hashed and cooked with rice, and these Gongyop, assisted by his wife but otherwise ignored, gave to the minor devils, throwing out a handful of food after an invocation to each specific devil (see illustration).

Later that night the solemn and private ceremony of *aboong ak* was performed. We were not able to witness it, but were given the following account:

A large winnowing tray—*Talyung*—is put on the floor with the curved end away from the teacher and the neophyte; at the straight end is placed a low table and on it is placed at the left a scarf with a rupee on it, in the centre a wooden cup filled with *chi* with butter on the rim (*sakyou faat*) and on the right a stone incense burner filled with incense leaves. On the winnowing tray the dedicated portions of the sacrificed animal[1] are laid out in the following order:

[1] An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophyte will be unable to expel Lom-doon *moong* (the devil of jaundice); if a goat he will be unable to expel Mat *moong* (this devil produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the result of ancestral quarrels).

opposite the *sakyou faat* cup is the head, facing the table; behind it are the upper intestines, the wind-pipe, oesophagus, etc., called here *oo-koong sha-fot*; to the left is a hind-leg and to the right a fore-leg; between the fore-leg and the intestines is a thigh-bone with some meat left on it called *shang-oh*. When all is arranged the Mun sits behind the table on the left behind the scarf with his pupil to the right of him (or her). First of all the Mun puts the rupee and scarf in the pupil's hands and then recites a prayer which the pupil repeats after him phrase by phrase. The Mun then gets up and stands at the foot of the offering and waves the incense burner over the pupil and the offerings; he then makes a solemn address to the pupil, explaining that he has paid the price to the devils to ransom his body, but on condition of dedicating his life to the Mun god and offering his body as a house for it. The Mun then returns to the same side as his pupil and gives him the buttered cup to drink from three times from three sides—first the side facing the sacrifice, then the opposite side and finally the right side. This drinking of the buttered *chi* is (as in all Mun ceremonials) the rinual consecration of the act undertaken; after this the pupil is bound to study with the teacher for three years.

Of the sacrificial ox one fore-leg and the heart, lungs, liver and intestines

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755 are given to the teacher as fee; the rest of the animal, except the portions on the winnowing tray, are divided up among the sacrificer and his guests. Of the portions on the tray the head, hind-leg, thigh-bone and upper intestines also go to the teacher; the dedicated fore-leg—*derkau*—is cut up raw into small pieces and one piece is given to every household in the village.

Note. In the above description of a lamaist and Mun ceremony I have given the details of the ritual objects which I have not given in the relevant chapters. Although the ingredients of every ceremony are very similar they differ in detail in every case. The details of lamaist offerings and their fabrication are minutely controlled by scriptural instructions. The Mun offerings are much less complicated. The greater number are fixed traditionally and are known to nearly every adult, but they may be varied at the inspiration of the officiating Mun for any particular ceremony.

It will be noticed that every lamaist horoscope entails the performance of certain lamaist ceremonies, and consequently brings money and goods to the body of lamas.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where
795 animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these
[787] ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and
[756] other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun;
793 for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose
[787] the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a
756 *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary
793 layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and
● 755 effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

793 A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it
787 is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

came from Tibet, and I presume them to be descendants of 756
the pre-Lamaist priests of that country. I have never come across them in Tibet; neither does Waddell nor Mme. David-Neel make any specific mention of them.* I imagine that they are now found only in the more remote parts of Sikkim, and possibly in Eastern Nepal.

Nunjimu are always women, and their male counterpart is known as Pawo. There is, however, no difference in their functions. When a Nunjimu dies the talent passes to some female member of the family, that of a Pawo to a male; but in neither case does it necessarily pass from parent to child. As in the case of Mun and Padim a person only becomes a Nunjimu or Pawo by means of illness, through some form of temporary madness. These people work by dancing themselves into a trance, after which they are believed to be able to diagnose the cause of an illness. It should be noted, however, that they never prescribe any treatment: having made known the cause of disease its cure is carried out by a Mun or Lama. Their functions have been to a great extent already usurped by the latter and they are only called in when a Mun or Lama has failed to effect a cure.

Tafoor's youngest child had been ill for several weeks with 756
what was undoubtedly whooping-cough. He had carried out 755
various Lamaistic services and had also called in a Mun. Finally, with unexpected forethought, he sent the child away to a neighbouring village, hoping that the change of air might do it good. In spite, however, of all his efforts the child got steadily worse. As a last resort he decided to call in the Nunjimu. We had tried several times to get this old woman to tell us about her work, but she always refused: and on this occasion she warned Tafoor not to let me know what she was doing, or the spirit would refuse to function. He, however, was a sceptic, and had only called her in at the earnest

* Waddell, however, mentions an inferior type of sorcerer known as Lha-Ka, or "God's mouthpiece." They "are found frequently in Western Tibet, and may be females. They somewhat resemble the *Nan-jorma* [*sic*] and Pawo of Sikkim, but are not devil dancers like the latter."

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was
755 given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*[1] which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from
[178] time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer
[522] sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

1 [i.e., dough cones.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
●755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
[753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

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756 emphatic. I felt as though I was waking out of a heavy sleep:
755 there was a strong desire to yawn, and I noticed that the others did the same. Quite suddenly the drumming ceased; and after a moment of silence one again became aware of other sounds; someone was husking rice outside the house, and fowls were scratching in the veranda. The Nunjimu took up a handful of grain and scattered it on the altar, snatched off her woollen wreath and got up from the floor. The performance was over.

756 While the dance was in progress I had come out from behind my screen and sat down on the floor amongst the others. The Nunjimu now expressed surprise at seeing me, and said that she had been unaware of my presence. This is the only circumstance that makes me feel that perhaps she was in a trance. I was otherwise not at all impressed; nor, I think, was Tafoor. I asked her to come outside and let me take a photograph. Katel told her not to; but she complied willingly, and even danced again for my benefit, roaring with laughter all the time. I got the impression that she did not really believe in the show herself. When it was over no one discussed what she had been saying; nor did she herself ask what the god had said. This was strange in view of the fact that she was presumed not to know what was happening while the spirit was in possession of her body. Although her speech was at times inaudible, the voice in which she spoke was her own. She had none of the tricks of the European medium, and altogether her show was as unimpressive as theirs. In due course the child recovered.

Lepchas sometimes also employ people known as Yaba and Yama, the former being the male. There were none in Lingtem; but from what I have seen of them in other places they appear to be exactly the same as Pawo and Nunjimu. They are said to be very common in Eastern Nepal and are usually members of the Limbu tribe. In Sikkim, they are found only in villages occupied by both Nepalis and Lepchas; and in the same way that the Pawo and Nunjimu were introduced from Tibet probably came to be incorporated

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined. 793 755

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household. [576]

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
●755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

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finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying 516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

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778 *Dungay:* nine. Ordinary small *tormas*, which represent the
755 stewards who control the servants.

Sunghliyu: one. A small pointed stick painted red. This is stuck in front and to the right of the figure. It represents its sword.

Thum Shing: two. These are small wooden labels. One is for women, the other for men. They are identical in shape and size; but the male has a design of crosses, thus: × × / × ×; and the female is marked like this: # # / # #. These labels are said to represent all the people of the inhabited world. The female is placed on the right, the male on the left.

Pung: six. Small sticks representing spinning rods, and hence women.

Chong: six. Thin bamboo slivers representing arrows, and hence men.

The *Pung* and *Chong* are arranged round the figure so as to form a fence. The arrows are on the right, the spinning rods on the left.

Yay: three. A large red one for the bull; a smaller blue one for the pig; yellow for the tiger.

Yay are used in every Lamaist ceremony other than those of a purely religious nature. They vary in size from elaborate erections, some ten feet in height, to the small ones required for the present ceremony, which are only about ten inches high. The *yay* is an arrangement of bamboo masts, on which is built up a geometrical pattern in twine of various colours. The colours and actual arrangement of the strings vary with different ceremonies. Some of them are extremely complicated and take many hours to make. Tafoor said that a great part of his later instruction was confined to the making of *yays*. As it is he now knows how to make many different kinds and carries all the details in his head. It is said that complete instructions for the making of *yays* have been placed on record, but in Lingtem no one possessed a copy of the book.

The *yay* is a sort of devil-trap or house. As soon as a demon

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

is expelled or summoned it sees the "house" which has been 778
newly made in its honour and settles there in preference to a 755
human habitation. Having entered it becomes entangled in the arrangement of strings and can then be taken with the offering and thrown away. Simple-minded demons can be trapped with a simple kind of *yay:* some, however, are not so silly and can only be caught in an elaborate arrangement that looks like a series of concentric spiders' webs inside several intertwined triangles. It is well known what sort of *yay* is required to catch any particular demon; and it seems that the latter never learn sense.

The three heads of the Go-sum are coloured respectively red, blue, and yellow to match the *yay* which is stuck behind the neck of each.

Gyong-bo: six. These are thin bamboo slivers with tufts of wool at the top and at intervals down their length. They represent *Tarchuk*, or prayer-flags for the living.

When these things have been arranged round the Go-sum the whole is garnished with leaves, brambles and flowers in season. A handful of assorted grain is sprinkled over it, and all is then complete. It is now taken and placed on the ground in front of the altar, after which the ceremony proceeds. The one Tafoor made for me took him the best part of one whole day; and while he was doing it he told me the following story:

THE STORY

There was once a god named Hla-Chongbu-Gadjen, whose 539
second daughter was in the habit of stealing flowers, the property of other gods. Because of this she was expelled from heaven and sent to live in the world. In due course she was reborn in Nepal, at a place called Pe-Yu Chorten.* Little of the girl's early life is known except that she was an orphan, and was taken into the household of the Maharaja of Nepal.

* This is Tibetan and merely means "(the place of) the Tibetan Chorten." A chorten is a Buddhist tope, or stupa. It is usually in the form of a huge dome.

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"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed 539
that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil 171
of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is 755
believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be 753
used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum [214]
is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755
171

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however,
[787] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,
					1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

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"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805
combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [17]
a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 751
Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755
compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper
[531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other
[578] person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

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possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child.

755
The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

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751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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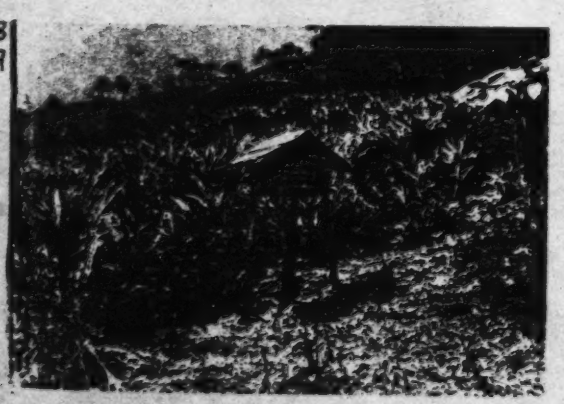

A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned
776 before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

●755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
777 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
778 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical
171 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the
778 Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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•755 a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

755 171 The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned [825] and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which [787]
was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depict- 778
ed alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.
In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
782 Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
778 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud*- demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 776 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

755 778 171

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 73. – Analyst]

755 778 171 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances, is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 778 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones, all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders [776 171] seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[704] 796 776 778 If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been

[see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

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793
796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(h) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [688] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 782 up the entire skin. The blood is not used at all. On the little table that is against the wall the Tormas are deposited 778 and in front of them the two butter-lamps. The order of the 776 Tormas is as follows: (See the drawing figs. 20 & 21) 1. Rum-755 thing-bo-a-mu, the wife of the supreme God. 2. Rum-thing-bo-782 a-bo, the Supreme God. 3. Nyom, the daughter-in-law. 4. Rum-thing-bo-ta-gri-kŏb, the son of the Supreme God. 5. San-tug-kan-dro-mu (San-tug is a place below Algara; Kan-dro-mu is evidently like the Tibetan bKa-gro-ma, a sky fairy.) 6. Don-dyŏ-chi-log, another spirit who personifies both the intoxicating drinks, dyŏ and chi. Each of these six deities has on either side of it two servants who are called Bya-ro. Torma number 2, which represents the Supreme God, is the largest. It is about five inches high, of oval shape and is decorated with ten small lumps of butter as is shown in the drawing. Torma number 1, the wife, is smaller, being about four inches high and round in shape with the same decorations of butter. Tormas number 3 to 6 are similar to number 1, except that they are three inches high only. In front of this row are three Ka to, Tormas number 7, 8 & 9. In a squarish socket five cone shaped objects are placed. These are perhaps symbolical of the five-peaked mountain, but we could find out nothing more definite about them. Torma number 10 is a deity, Ka-to-sam or Gon-hiu-so. It is about two inches high, conical in shape, and decorated with streaks of butter. The Tormas of the Bya-ro servants are all alike, a little smaller and devoid of decorations. Before the table on which are placed the Tormas and the butter-lamps, there are five bamboo vessels and a wooden cup filled with chi. The cup, which stands fourth from the left, has its rim decorated with three little lumps of butter and is called San-dyŏ. We notice here again the names "chi" and "dyŏ" borne by the sixth deity. In front of these vessels there is a second small table, and six piles of rice placed on six banana leaf-plates lie on it. On top of each pile of rice are deposited a rib of the sacrifice and tiny pieces of the heart, liver, lung, spleen and kidneys. The number SIX is therefore a standard,—there are six principal gods, six chi containers, six piles of rice and six pieces of meat.

A banana leaf-plate containing rice is placed behind the skin on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh had been placed.

[Text continues on p. 63]

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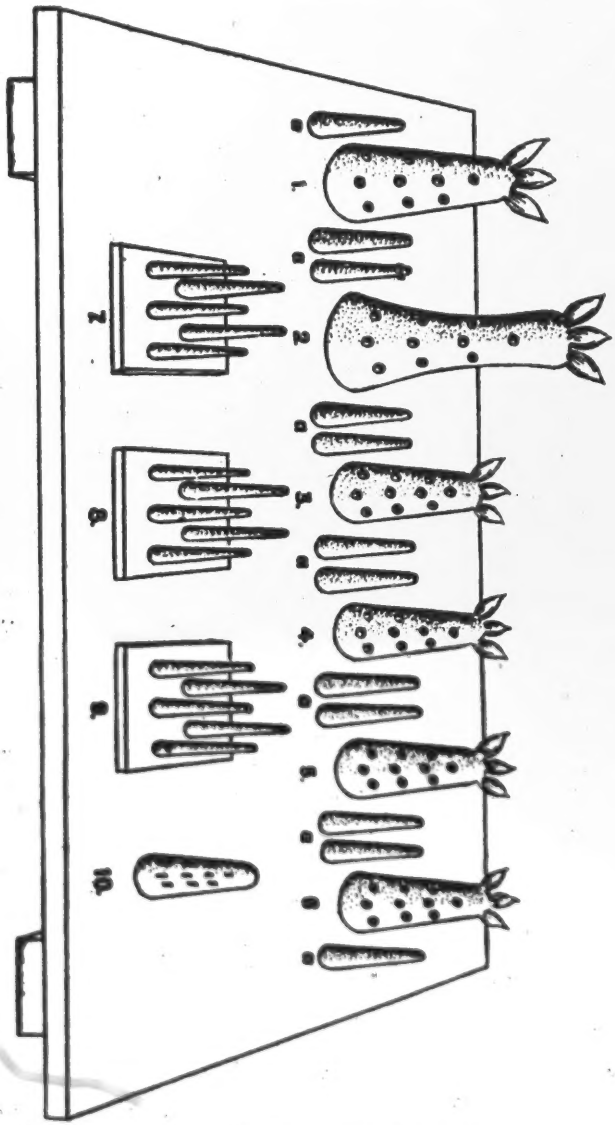

Fig. 20, Tormas of the gods

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Fig. 21, The cattle sacrifice

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755 782 [778 776] [293] [787] [776] 755 782

On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dö god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miä song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

[539]

60. sa her rum bu gun dö rum bu sa dsug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dö god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pö blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyär pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dsän dong däm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dsän dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu däm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dsän dong hiu däm dong hiu o! ön sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miä song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

776 I offer the smoke of incense. Come hither! To the father and to
●755 the mother I offer gold Torma, I offer money Torma; I offer,
762 I offer, I offer incense to San tug kan dro mu; come hither!
I offer incense; come hither! I offer to Chi, the millet beer spirit, to the rice offering spirit, to Dyö, the millet beer spirit; come hither! Verify this, O God, that we are sick. Come hither and tell it; come here and say it. How the head is racked with pain, the loins ache, the body, the hands, the feet are paining and the belly is aching, this O God verify. Come hither and state it. How the demons bite that examine ye gods; come here and tell it. In this manner I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person. As a substitute for the body and the soul I offer this bull. I offer this substitute of life; I sacrifice this bound bull as a substitute for the body. I sacrifice this bound bull to Ge bu."[60a]

[539] 60a. nyom mu (Daughter-in-law of the Supreme God). yab yum pong Father, mother (Tibetan names for the whole family of the God.)

sang blong ga kög ma o! yab yum dyär pa dong
I offer smoke of incense! Come here! To Father, Mother I offer gold Torma.

gom pa dong dzän dong hiu fat ma o
I offer money Torma, I offer! I offer!

San tug kan dro mu sang blong ga kög gad mao.
To San tug Kan dro mu offer of incense! Come here!

plö blong ga kög gad mao!
offer of incense, come here!

chi log so log sang dyö ma djin blong ga
Millet beer (spirit), Rice offer (spirit), Millet beer (spirit) offer!

kög gad mao so yu song dog non rum dyop ga plö buo dön ga
Come here! That we are sick, examine this O God now. Come here and tell us.

plö buo sareb song adyak non
Come here and say it. How the head aches,

achyang dog non me so dog non a go a tong dog
the loins pain, the body pains, hands and feet pain,

ta bak dog a yu rum pong dyop ga plö buo!
the belly aches. O God examine these things. Come here and tell it.

an sareb song mung nöng trug bang ga rum dyop ga plö buo
How the demons bite examine that ye gods. Come here and tell it.

alom bö mad big djäk chim yu re söm
In this way I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person.

me sö löm sa lo löm big bu
As a body substitute, as a soul substitute I sacrifice this bull.

sok löm bu me sö löm
I sacrifice this substitute of life, as a body substitute

big djäk bu mo Ge bu long big long djäk bu mo.
this bound bull I sacrifice. To the Ge bu, this bull, this bound bull I sacrifice."

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family ; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely : Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

●765 782 776 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation). The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created. Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation, so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods [774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods; dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gom shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar ngag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö söng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

smung gung man la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

755
782
776
[774]

and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot (bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[537]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung ghum rum pong sug ngag la bam
to the water and the flood goods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.

dö dö dzam bi dzam myong rum pong khing tzung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,

syek alat rum pong dzö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,

ong hon pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life; if I know how to sacrifice, so

sug yu gong nön dö dö khing tzung go nöng sug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it; if I do not

nön dö dö a rö a riom plö cho djü la sag yö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know

gong la rum göm
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.

djö la sug ma yö nöng gong na mung göm
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.

dö dö sug la ma yöng gong na mung ni gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.

a lam sog döm ga syek alat plö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here!

nyö ting sa rum gön go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,

sti adzo nong ga su gad shö bu sa yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.

ffö thing ga ting long fat sa yuk gom
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.

go yu sun nin sog döm ga chi log so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

755 rice-offerings. Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestors in ancient
782 times did—so do we now. We do not know how to speak in
776 this world; but we have arranged the sacrifice. As this world's life-spirit we, creatures, hold the branches of the Na sö and Na ling trees. We, the sons of Bong-thing, the Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. That is the place to carry the Na sö and Na ling branches which I take consciously. Now I swear an oath to Ta she tak bo thing. Therefore I push a stone into the earth and I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth (as witnesses of the oath). In this place I take the oath. I do it in our own interest. Today, in this very place I take the oath. The paths of the demons are barred. Through the wonderful powers of Ta she tak bo thing I offer this sacrifice. Henceforward we offer a compensation, a bodily substitute: Send no more suffering to this person."[61b]

[539] 61b. Fat bam a re a thing a nlö sa dal thing gung dö ni syit
Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestor did since ancient times,
plö nöng sug bam
so we also perform the sacrifice.
sog döm lyang ga go yusöng dön ma kön go yu rum
In this world we do not know how we should speak. We have arranged
tek so sog
the sacrifice (rum, god, has also the meaning of sacrifice). As this
döm löng ming tang ga son chio nin cho sa liang ga na sö na ling
world's life spirit we, creatures, hold here branches of the Na sö and Na ling
nom bong thing köb
trees (similar to the Nepalese Panisage and Sau tree). We, Bong-thing sons,

bong thing la mi köb nöng ga sog döm ga
we, Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. Here in this place carrying
na sö na ling nom hö nöng go tzam nöng ga.
the Na sö na ling branches, I take hold of them consciously.
ta she tak bo thing riak to long tzog.
To Ta she tak bo thing I swear an oath. I push a stone into the earth.
bu tzum bu yak to nön
I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth. (This ceremony takes place at the swearing and oath taking, so that the oath is sworn over the stone and the bamboo, which are placed side by side.)
sog döm riak to sön tön do ga
Here in this place I take the oath. In our own interest I do it.
sa rong sa ni riak are to nön sog döm ga
Just today I take the oath here. Thus here in this place
mung sa lom chat are tak bo she thing sa
the demons' ways are barred. Now through Tak bo she things' wonder-
a dyän sa löm nöng to Along ren me sü löm
powers, I bring this sacrifice. From now on, a bodily substitute, a
sa lö löm bo son areka gi dök ma bin
compensation we give. Send no more suffering to this person."

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685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of
756 getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are
793 considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

[*Lamaism, or, as it is sometimes called, Mahayana Buddhism, is a subject of the greatest complexity, to the study of which scholars of world-wide repute have devoted their whole lives. Its organisation is as elaborate as that of the medieval Catholic church, its hagiology, demonology and ritual are infinitely more complicated, and it is split into nearly as many sub-sects as contemporary Christianity. My ignorance of Tibetan prevents me discussing it in any great detail. Among the Lepchas of Zongu the practices of lamaism present more variety of detail than any other single facet of their lives; my notes on lamaist ritual far exceed those on any other subject. I had at one moment considered comparing the lamaism as I saw it practised in Lingthem with the accounts given by other people of more orthodox practices in unmixed lamaist communities, but even confining myself to those rites at which I was present, I soon discovered that the bulk of the material involved would be out of all proportion to its place in the social and religious life of the Lepchas. I have therefore limited myself to a generalised account of the impact of lamaism on the life of the Lepchas of Zongu; in practically no instances have I given the details of ritual or of the fabrication of ritual objects, not because I do not know them, but because they would overweight what is from my point of view a subsidiary subject. To a lesser degree these remarks also apply to the rituals of the Mun and to the extremely elaborate mythology and folklore derived from both religions. Possibly in the future (I hope with the collaboration of Mr. C. J. Morris) I may publish the full details of the ritual and belief of both religions in a different work.*]

i

The discussion of the Lepchas' religion is rendered extremely complicated by the fact that they practise simultaneously, and without any feeling of theoretical discomfort, two (or possibly three) mutually contradictory religions: of these the older Lepcha

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

771 religion is nameless but, on the analogy of lamaism, I propose calling it the Mun religion (after the title of the priests); the worship of
● 756 the people of Mayel, which was possibly originally separate, forms nowadays a part of the Mun religion; and this religion is in all its major beliefs opposed to lamaism. For the Mun priesthood goes by the possession of a manifestation of a supernatural spirit which is attached to a family line, so that there can never be more than one simultaneously in each group (there may be two in one biological family, one spirit descending from the father's group, and one from the mother's). The chief function of the Mun is to ward off the misfortunes and illnesses caused by devils, which is done, partly by sacrifices, especially animal sacrifices, and partly by direct communing with the supernaturals. On certain occasions the Mun become possessed by their guardian spirit and prophesy; at death ceremonies they summon the soul of the dead man to speak his last wishes through their mouth, and then conduct it into the *rum lyang*—the place of the Gods—where it is reborn as an infant, and grows up to an eternal life similar to the life here on earth.

771 In lamaism on the contrary priesthood and sanctity are acquired by learning and not by inspiration; the sacrifice of animals is a
779 heinous sin; the future can be learned by calculations from the holy books and not by inspiration; the soul of the dead wanders for a short time in a sort of purgatory, before being reincarnated either in another form on this earth, or going to some heaven or hell, as different as imagination can make them from anything experienced on earth. Most important of all, lamaist ethics are founded on a belief in individual destiny and a sense of sin; lamaism contains a long, explicit and detailed list of sins which can be performed by human beings, and which are visited on the evil-doer, first by feelings of remorse and secondly by punishment either in this life or in future reincarnations. Lepchas have a word for sin, because they have borrowed the Tibetan word, but they have, I think, no idea of sin; and the only act to which the word is commonly applied is to the killing of animals; by a few who have accepted lamaism it is also applied to envy or slander, expressed in thought, word or deed. With these exceptions they do not use the word 'sin,' *la-yo*, in connection with individual behaviour; the supernatural sanctions which punish disapproved-of actions are expressed as *nam-toak*, a year of disaster which affects the whole community. Even for acts less violently disapproved of, which

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incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lamaist supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

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000 essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

771 The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand,
779 collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a
756 good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have
787 stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid
777 excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

756 Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men
771 flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands
779 a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and
787 also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a
[824] hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

774 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

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CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGION II: THE MUN

i

As opposed to lamaism the Mun religion carries with it no social organisation; the Mun and their parallel priests are simply individuals who, through their possession by a spirit, have certain gifts and duties; unlike the lamas and the civil officers their position carries with it no sort of title in ordinary life. Besides the Mun three other types of priesthood by possession are recognised; these are the Padem, the Yaba, and the Pau. The Mun spirit is a female spirit, the other three are male. They are attached to family lines and are roughly hereditary; they often descend from grandfather to grandson or from grandmother to granddaughter; but there is no regularity about this and a man may inherit a possessing spirit from a woman, and *vice versa*; once the vehicle dies the spirit may not choose another body immediately and large groups may be without the possessing spirit for a number of years. The manifestation of the spirit (for the spirits themselves live immortal beyond Kinchenjunga) may choose anybody for its vehicle, with one exception; none of the spirits will enter a lama or his own children, though they may enter his family. 756 ● 771

Both men and women can be Mun, but only men can be Padem (or Bum-*thing* as they are called outside Zongu); these are both pure Lepcha spirits and are essentially similar, save that the Padem are far less powerful, and that instruction by an already qualified Padem is optional, whereas for Mun a three year course of instruction is obligatory. Padem are weaker than Mun and capable of exorcising far fewer devils; they cannot prophesy nor perform the death ceremony. For many men Padem is the first step to becoming Mun; in Lingthem there are altogether eight Mun[1] of which four 756

[1] They are (men) Katel, Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu (Gongyop's elder brother) and Agyung (the adopted son of Serving): of these Gongyop practises regularly, Katel occasionally, the other two hardly at all. (women)

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●756 are men; of these three were first of all Padem. Kurma is Padem only; he can diagnose but can only perform a few sacrifices and exorcisms.

The other two groups of possessed priests resemble one another and differ from Mun and Padem in so far as neither can make sacrifices nor perform exorcisms, but can merely get possessed by supernaturals; they dance until the supernatural speaks through [292] them and discloses its wants and whereabouts. Both wear special clothes for their performances: the Yaba (women are called Yama) wear bandoliers of tinkling bells and have their clothes fringed with bells; they hold a metal plate and beat it as they dance. Pau (women are called Nandjému) wear elaborate wool head-dresses and dance with a skull-drum in one hand and a bell in the other. Both Yaba and Pau are and have been very rare because the possessing spirits are not Lepcha but have been introduced through inter-marriage with foreign women, the Yaba spirit comes from Limbu women (the Limbu are a Nepali tribe) and the Pau from Sikkimese-Tibetans. There is a tradition that there is a similar spirit called Jhankri belonging to the Chetri,[2] but this spirit has never manifested itself among the Lepchas as there has been no inter-marriage between the two groups.

There is only one representative of this group in Lingthem: the 'elder grandmother' of Patek, an old woman over seventy, is a Nandjému. The service of these diviners is only called in when lama and Mun fail to agree on a diagnosis, or when there is reason to suppose that a new devil has taken up its abode in the neighbourhood. In such cases a Pau or Yaba, usually from another village, will be called in to discover its home and its needs.

754 It is believed that there are two sorts of Mun, a good group called Tang-li Mun and a bad group called Mun-mook Mun; the 756 difference is similar to the traditional difference between white and black magicians. 'Mun-mook Mun are like thieves: they think and do evil and are possessed by devils which they employ for their own selfish ends; they alone can send devils (the term used for sorcery).' They are believed to have an influence like the evil

Pumri (wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon), the elder wife of Lumba *chithembu* (she is the daughter of Pumri and has the paternal spirit) the 'younger grandmother' of Patek, and the sister of Jiroong (the wife of Kaji). All four women practise.

[2] This Lepcha tradition is incorrect: the Chetri are a fairly pure Hindu tribe; the Jhankri occur among the Gurung.

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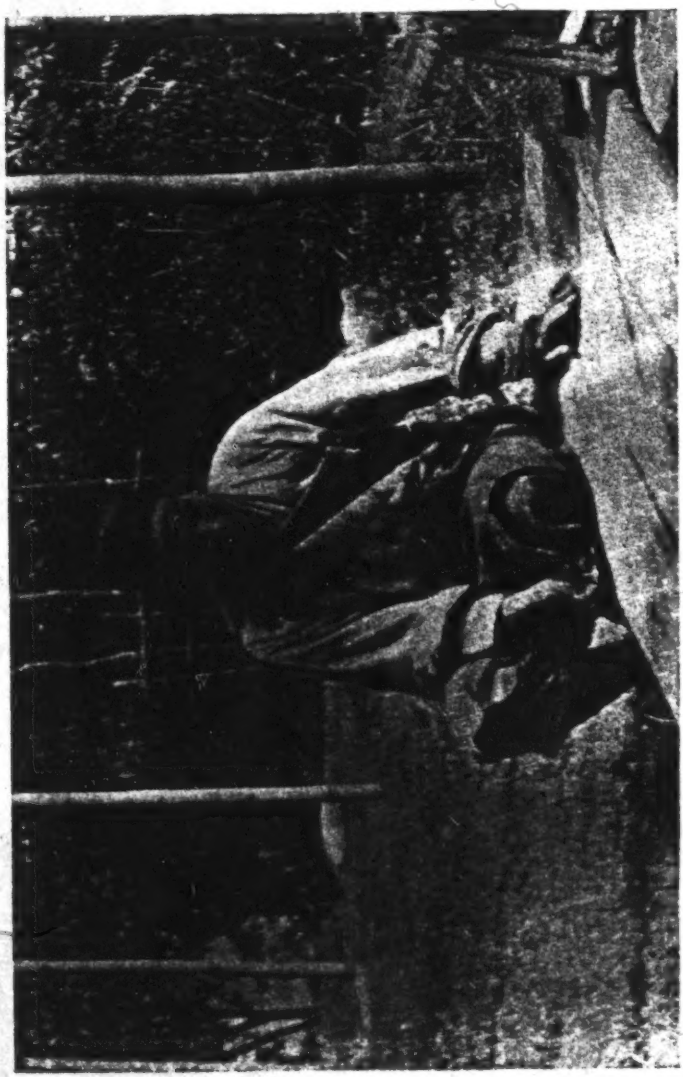
756



THE MUN GONGYOP

[facing p. 216]

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754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

X159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls
[195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of
[152] falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervousness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

work of Padem; the spirit will instruct before each ceremony as to what is needed in the way of sacrifices by means of dreams in which the spirit will be represented by Europeans or Kings of Sikkim and other States. This divination by dream never failed, before each ceremony I would dream the requisite ritual.

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'After I had been a Padem for some years I was taken ill again as before, so ill that I lay like one paralysed and all my hair fell out. My senses were confused and I could neither see nor hear properly. By night I used to dream of huge bridges and roads and of myself walking and riding over them to all the countries of the world, Tibet and Bhutan and Nepal and India and Europe. There I would meet people and talk with them in their own language; in the neighbouring countries I would meet and talk to the Kings: in Europe I stayed in people's houses and there were so many houses you could not see the ground. I lay almost like one dead.

'Before I got really ill like this I was acting almost like a madman wandering into the forest and other people's houses; I did not know what I was doing and I did not recognise people. I used to travel about very quickly and not know how I had got to where I was; the neighbours called in the Mun and Padem but it was no use.

'When I lay ill the Mun and lamas exorcised unavailingly; but finally a lama recognised that I was troubled by the Mun god and he told me that I must make her my private god. The lamas then divined who was the most fitting person to perform the ceremony of *Rum keuk* (recognising the god) and decided upon an old female Mun who lived some way away. She came and a sacrifice was prepared consisting of a tray covered with offerings of dried fish and dried bird and ginger and pop corn and rice and other crops and various sorts of *chi*; this she offered to the gods saying in *tang-bor* (circumlocutions) that she was making these offerings for the invalid and would the gods please accept both them and him. An ox was then killed and she took away the intestines and the head and two legs; she was also given Rs. 5 but she gave them back and only took them for herself when I was fully instructed. When the Mun had made her sacrifice she fed me with *chi* by hand and she put a silver rupee in my hand and a ceremonial scarf round my neck and said to me "From today the *rum* will be with you and you must learn all the work of the Mun". She stayed three nights and then returned home. From that day I started recovering;

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two days later I was able to go outside the house and within a month
756 I was strong enough to go and visit the Mun. On my first visit I took with me a load of *chi*; I used to pay her visits of varying length—five, ten, or fifteen days, according to the amount of time necessary to learn completely one sort of ritual or story—and I would return home to meditate upon it before proceeding further. I studied in all three years before I could be given *loong*.[3] I had to know the history of every devil and how to exorcise it as well as the story of creation and the birth of Tak-bo-*thing* and many things more. During my training I was not allowed to eat pork or goat or chicken or hen's eggs for if I had there would have been devils I could not have controlled. At the end of my three years' training when I had got my *loong* my teacher had all the forbidden foods boiled and put in a basket; then after she had given me *chi* and butter to drink and a ceremonial scarf she told me that now I had power over all the devils and could eat all forbidden foods, after which with her own hands she gave me three mouthfuls of each sort of food. When I was given my *loong* a second ox was sacrificed; the first time I was so weak that I had to stop indoors while the sacrifice was made.

'Until I got my *loong* I could not officiate as Mun but I could continue to do so as Padem; there is no quarrel between the Padem *rum* and Mun *rum* as they are husband and wife respectively and are pleased to inhabit the same body. They do so however comparatively rarely as no woman can be Padem though she may be Mun and a man can be Padem without being Mun, and *vice versa*. A person like myself can call down Padem *rum* or Mun *rum* at will; before possession the Padem *rum* does not call down the Mun *rum* to visit him though he is pleased when she comes. The spirits are not permanently present in their dwelling;[4] they come down from their home, which is reached from a passage beyond Kinchenjunga, when they are summoned. When they do come down the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

756 "The Mun only takes full possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise; I tremble constantly and am covered with

[3] See Chapter Seven, p. 196.

[4] Gongyop constantly referred to his body as the *li*—the house of the spirits.

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY I

Above : The Mandal and Gongyos (arm only) fill the containers of the *rum* offered to the devils with milk and tea.

Below : Pumri offers strained *chi* in a cup to the gods of Kinchenjunga. Old Kahlyeu, on her left, offers grain.

[Facing p. 220]

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756 sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off and I offer them *chi* and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower-bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel as though a heavy burden were pressing over my shoulders and as if my flesh were being poked with sticks—zinga—zinga—zinga—zinga—; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and walk outside in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put the necklace on me the gods would be angry and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed, even the children. I blow into each person's face and on the offerings; then I scatter *chi* and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half-year. After the prophecy I recover consciousness but not till cock-crow the next day do I feel all right again.[5]

'When I am called in in the case of illness the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animal or insect or person, depending on which devil it is; thus Lum dong *moong* appears as a pig, Sor *moong* as a dirty ragged old woman, Arot *moong* as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious.

[784] 'A Mun must on no account touch a human corpse; should he do so the god will depart and he will be very ill for two months and lamas have to perform ceremonies to cure him. This is the only occasion on which the spirit will leave a Mun. A dead Mun is buried in the ordinary way and his soul has to be conducted to the *rum lyang* (place of the gods) in the normal manner; the gods

[5] All Mun do this ceremony twice a year (no more and no less) but on different days; informants agree that their prophecies are never mutually contradictory; they are always fairly generalized.

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756 which have inhabited the live body have no concern with the soul after death.'

Gongyop said on another occasion that he thinks it an unhappy thing to be a Mun. He would have preferred not to have been one himself and he prays that his son will escape the visitation. 'May Tangen *moong* spare my son.' The perquisites do not make up for the illness and the work.

Among laymen it is a very general feeling that it is a misfortune to be a Mun; as well as the psychological and physical distress there is the added fact that Mun are responsible for the killing of many animals; but the Mun themselves say that this sin is not borne by them but by the devils who make the sacrifices necessary.

The onset of possession is described in much the same way by other Mun and Padem also. Kurma who was possessed by the Padem spirit when he was ten said he felt ill and almost mad for three months; he ached so much that he could not move, his body felt as though it were going to burst. He neither saw nor heard properly; he ate little and drank nothing. At times he felt as though he were flying or sitting on trees; at other times his body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs. The symptoms disappeared after diagnosis and acceptance of the Padem god.

I was unfortunately not able to see anybody during these initial phases of possession. During my stay Mrs. Chano was diagnosed as being possessed by the Mun spirit but the sense delusions and wanderings had passed and she merely stopped at home very listless and apathetic. Gongyop performed the ceremony of dedication and was going to become her teacher.[6]

It is worth noting that except for the bi-annual prophecies[7] the Mun do not possess supernatural powers as the Lepchas understand them, and they differ in degree rather than in kind from the laymen; they can always see devils, whereas only some laymen can see them and that only on some occasions; they can always communicate with supernaturals, whereas only certain old and experienced laymen can do so. A great deal of the Mun ritual, as opposed to the divination, can be performed by laymen.

[6] This is described in Appendix III.

[7] And calling up the soul of a dead man and making him speak; but only very few Mun possess this art, and none in Lingthem. See Chapter Thirteen.

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ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today. 756 779

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein. 773 539

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY II

The model of Mamoo *moong* with the '*deu*'—the nine-storeyed devil's palace made out of coloured threads—in position down by the *chotes* just before the worship begins. In the foreground are Katel and Jiroong. Behind, Chala Mandal and Lumba.

[facing p. 224]

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773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat 539 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two 581 points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for [881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

●756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities 776 Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

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756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, 841 539 for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

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The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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756 each household. There are however a few ceremonies when a Mun sacrifices and prophesies for the whole community; but all that I have seen or heard of are adjuncts to lamaist ceremonies.

756 In the Cherim ceremony which is held twice yearly, once at the beginning of the rains, and again at the beginning of winter, to 796 keep off illness from the community, three separate rituals are performed, two by Mun, and the third by lamas. The communal nature of these sacrifices is emphasized and at least one individual from each household has to be present, and each household contributes a little of the grain. So that the Mun can participate the ceremony is held on neutral ground, when I saw it on March 28th., by the *choten* below the monastery and just outside the sacred precincts.

The first part of the ceremony consists of an offering to the devils: this ceremony is called *rum* after the name given to the chief article of sacrifice. This is a large basket filled with earth and covered with a banana leaf into which are inserted a number of varied articles with eight[11] of each sort of article: 'devil's walking-sticks' consisting of decorated bamboos with flowers inserted in holes, containers of water, milk, tea and *chi*, pieces of mica, stems of wormwood decorated with threads, fresh eggs, heaps of grain, and dried bird, dried fish and ginger. There are also offered two *ta-ming* which consist of long sticks to which are attached wrapped in leaves samples of every sort of food and drink. When the offerings have been made the Mun, sitting opposite them, intones a long chant [787] to invoke the gods, and then takes the eggs and holds them to his forehead while he shuts his eyes and concentrates; the line which he envisages inside the eggs foretells the future health of the community. In the spring of 1937 Gongyop saw 'a fairly straight path' which signifies that there will be a mild epidemic of stomach trouble. Four years ago, when there was a bad epidemic of dysentery he saw 'a curved, almost spiral path, with a knot at the end of it.'

The second ceremony, also performed by Mun, consists of offerings to the Gods of Kinchenjunga and the Plains, and is called Tsandong. The offerings consist of rice, butter, *chimi*, a rupee and eggs. The sacrifice is in two parts; first grain and strained *chi* are thrown out by the Mun and her assistant (in March 1937 Pumri was assisted by old Kahlyeu) and later a goat is dedicated and then killed.

[11] It may be noted that for Mun and lama odd numbers are lucky, even unlucky.

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamoo *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nakleus* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chazé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

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75 76 [78] These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace' consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo. This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom; in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representation of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and readings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began; then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use); and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbutipkū* round her image were handed out for all to wave over themselves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar. It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in procession across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments, as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away. On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the 796 Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The 783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth [843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot [585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the *ingzong* relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking. It is used in all ceremonies for which a blessing is invoked (as opposed to exorcisms), sometimes alone, sometimes with the *lafét*[12] sacrifice. It is always made privately in each household after the sowing of a field. It is the most solemn sacrament in Lepcha life.

When a Mun is called in to exorcise a devil the most usual situation is as follows. After the specific devil has been divined the Mun spends a night in his own home *munthen*-ing—that is summoning and communing with his possessing spirit—to discover the reason for that particular devil having attacked that particular person, and to learn what sacrifices or ritual are necessary to exorcise it. The question of causation is bound up with the conception of *tamtoom*—the necessary consequence of an earlier act; often this act was not committed by the sufferer, but by fairly remote ancestors. Thus the Mandal suffered from lumbago as the *tamtoom* of one of his ancestors having abandoned a baby in a field-house, where it was burnt to death. A complicating cause, which also accounted for his failure to produce a son, was that the spirit of his first dead wife was plaguing him because, although herself a Mun, she had been cremated and conducted to heaven by lamas (as though she were a nun) instead of being buried and led to a heaven by a Mun. Angered at this treatment her spirit had been transformed into Sabdok *moong* and in this guise came from the *rumlyang* from time to time to plague her husband and to prevent his having any sons. In this task she was assisted by the Hit *rum*, the Mun god who looks after the new-born dead.[13]

Such a *tamtoom* as this is almost impossible to lift but the Mandal did all in his power to persuade Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to lift the curse, making many sacrifices, and even summoning with many presents an old and widely famed Mun[14] from a village two days journey away. Before Gongyop started performing the

[12] See Chapter Two, p. 74.

[13] The Mun worship two supernaturals, Hit *rum* and Dé *rum*, who are considered to be ancestral gods who look after all dead Lepchas. Their positions and functions in the Mun eschatology will be more fully described in Chapter Thirteen.

[14] This man, besides being a Mun, was also a Pau and Yaba. Gongyop, who assisted in the sacrifice, said that he had heard he was a 'black' Mun—Mun-mook Mun—, but he was not able to form any opinion from the prayers he heard him say.

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CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

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I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

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eleven o'clock he had a bad fit of shivering as from fever, though his pulse was low. He spent the earlier part of the morning talking about his past life and especially about religious ceremonials and his own experiences as Padem. He has three rosaries and can make diagnosis. He never had a teacher to learn how to do this but learnt it through the inspiration of Padem *rum* and also from observing his mother and other Mun. He gave an illustration of the way in which he would consult his rosary in the event of another person being ill. Whether consultation shall be made or not depends partly on personal inclination and partly on wealth. Kurma said he had not consulted for his sick son or for himself because of the expense. About midday he almost collapsed and I had to give him medicine. He says he has been this way for seven days and cannot sleep inside but only out of doors. He has completely lost appetite and when he shivers suffers from optical disturbances; grown-ups look no bigger than children and he sees red and white spots moving about over the ground and has a pain under his heart; a couple of days ago he was really bad and thought he was going to die. No Mun or lama has been called in; who is going to do it? His mother-in-law and nephew are 'strangers' and do not care about him.

He has recently spent seven days with his parents-in-law working for them; it was his first visit for three months. His small son was ill with a discharge of blood from his ears and sores all down one side. At present he is slightly recovered. No professional advice was called in. Kurma says one woman said of the child: 'His father is a foreigner from Lingthem, why bother about it?'

May 19th.

Kurma came up to-day for the first time since the 13th; he walked with a stick and still looked very seedy, sweating profusely. He said, however, he was better and brought a present of eggs and tomatoes for the medicine I had given him; I gave him a lot of quinine and a little aspirin; he took all the latter but only three tablets of the quinine because it was so bitter. He was in a highly nervous state and when there was a sharp noise (either a gun[20] or a bamboo snapping) he jumped several inches and exclaimed in a frightened voice: '*athu lukni lu-li-ko*'—words which I cannot translate and which Kurma said were meaningless; to turn the

[20] There are a couple of very old match-locks in the village which are occasionally used.

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774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[53b] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

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individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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CHAPTER 7

Exorcism and Other Magical Practices

754 IN the wild and mountainous forests of Sikkim "it is fitting," writes Mme. David-Neel, "that sorcery should hold sway. The so-called Buddhist population is practically Shamanist and a large number of mediums: Bönpos, Pawos, Bunting and Yabas of both sexes, even in the smallest hamlets, transmit the messages of gods, demons and the dead."

I have already made a number of scattered references to these people, and shall now try to disentangle the extremely muddled and conflicting Lepcha ideas concerning them.

756 In the first place, it seems clear that prior to the advent of Lamaism in Sikkim the only recourse the Lepchas had to their demons and gods was through the medium of *Mun* and *Padim*. According to the dictionary the former word means a "vagrant singing priest"; it can also be used to denote "an exorciser; or any experienced person." Padim, on the other hand, is given as "one unacquainted with religion and exorcism; or belonging to the laity"; but this meaning was not known in Lingtem. The difference between the two is not at all clear, nor are their powers strictly defined; but whereas both men and women may become Mun, it is impossible for a woman to be a Padim. The position seems to have some points in common with the Shamanism of Siberia; for whereas the Padim's god is male, that of the Mun is female. A Padim has power over certain demons only; but a Mun has power over all. From time to time a Mun becomes "possessed"; but a Padim never. A Padim receives no instruction in his duties; and such esoteric knowledge as he

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756 possesses is revealed to him in dreams. Although there were several Padim in Lingtem no one seemed to employ them, preferring always to call in a Mun. The difference between the two seems to be similar to that between a chemist, for instance, and a doctor, the Mun, of course, representing the latter.

756 There is, so far as I know, no ceremony which Mun
793 perform in Lingtem that in a more orthodox Lamaist society could not be performed equally well by Lamas: and while the latter have usurped many of the Mun's functions, at the present time the two work side by side in perfect amity, perhaps because of the equable Lepcha temperament. There is not the slightest rivalry between them, and when a Lama is called in to advise he will often recommend some ceremony for which a Mun is necessary.

756 A man does not become a Mun or Padim by inclination, but because of an irresistible compulsion manifested through some illness. Most of those with whom we talked, although they liked the presents that their patients brought them, would have preferred to be like ordinary men. There is only a certain number in every clan; and when one dies the talent passes on. Thus, although it is possible for a mother and son both to be Mun the talent is not hereditary; nor is it necessary for a man to be a Padim before becoming a Mun, although this sometimes happens.

Gongyop, the most popular Mun in Lingtem, became one only five years ago. He is at present forty-eight, and was a Padim for twenty years before he became a Mun. When he was in his early twenties he was taken very ill; and was weak and listless for a long time. The cause of his illness was eventually diagnosed, and it was seen that only by becoming a Padim could he recover his health. He could eat no rice, nor could he drink *chi;* and his limbs felt as though they had been tied up, and he could not walk. He remained in this state for nearly two years. However, as soon as the cause of his trouble was discovered he rapidly recovered. He became a Padim by the mere performance of the necessary ceremony;

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but later on a Mun appeared to him in a dream and told him what to do. Nowadays he always dreams before a ceremony, and thus learns what action he has to take. During the course of these dreams he speaks with Kings of Sikkim, Europeans, and all sorts of other people. Actually it is a demon who is speaking to him, but it has chosen to adopt this form.

Before becoming a Mun Gongyop was ill for nearly three years, and during all this time lay almost like dead, the symptoms being the same as with his previous illness. He was visited by both Mun and Lamas; and both divined that he was being troubled by the Mun's own private god; and that the only way he could recover was to make this god his own. Part of the ceremony was done by a Lama; but the most important part, known as *Rum-Keuk*, was done by a female Mun. An ox was slaughtered and part of its flesh, together with grain and butter, was offered to the gods by the Mun. She was offered five rupees in payment for her services; but refused to accept any money until Gongyop had completed his studies: she took only the head and two legs of the ox, together with its vital organs. These had formed the actual ceremonial offering. Gongyop did not understand the words she used during the ceremony as she spoke in a special esoteric language; but in any case he was so ill at the time that he could not even drag himself outside the house for the purposes of nature: he was unable to see properly; nor could he hear. He remained by her side during the ceremony and from time to time she waved things over him. Before the actual physical signs of his illness developed he became as one mad. He would wander aimlessly about without knowing where he was going: sometimes he went to other people's houses, and sometimes he would roam in the forest. He never knew what he was doing; nor did he afterwards remember where he had been. Sometimes he had the feeling that he could walk very fast, as though he was being transported on air. He believes that in this way he

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756 covered immense distances.* During this time he was unable to recognise people; not even his own wife. During the later stages of the illness he used to dream every night that he was travelling all over the world. He believes that in this way he visited Europe, and often went to Tibet and Bhutan. He could speak all languages, and see all things. During the ceremony the Mun, who later became his teacher, fed him with *chi*, put a rupee into his hand, and placed a ceremonial scarf round his neck. She then told him that from that day the Mun's special god would be with him, and that he must therefore learn the work. He started to recover from that very day, and was able to commence his studies almost at once. His teacher stayed with him for three days more, and a month later he went to her home, which was in a village on the other side of the hill, taking with him a load of *chi* as a present.

It was three years before Gongyop was able to practise as a Mun. He did not stay with his teacher all this time; sometimes he remained with her for ten days; sometimes for several weeks: but in between he would try and commit to memory the things that she had taught him. He had to learn the names of all the demons; where they lived, and the various means of communicating with them; also the sacrifice which each demanded. In addition to this he was also required to commit to memory the story of the creation, a shortened version of which I have given at the commencement of Chapter 4. The complete story takes more than

* Mme. David-Neel states that some Tibetan ascetics indulge in a practice known as *lung-gom*. This is a special kind of training "which is said to develop uncommon nimbleness and especially enables its adepts to take extraordinarily long tramps with amazing rapidity. Belief in such a training and its efficacy has existed for many years in Tibet, and men who travelled with supernormal rapidity are mentioned in many traditions. . . . The performance does not consist in racing at full speed over a short distance as is done in our sporting matches, but of tramping at a rapid pace and without stopping during several successive days and nights."

Mme. David-Neel was fortunate enough actually to witness an exhibition of *lung-gom*. I have not myself seen it, nor is it practised by Lepchas, although they would appear to have heard of it. Chapter VI of her book, *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, which deals with this and kindred subjects, is of great interest.

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three days to tell. Gongyop was very anxious that we should 756
write it down; but the flesh was not sufficiently strong! At the end of his third year an ox was sacrificed, and his teacher pronounced him as fit, although he has still a number of things to learn. He cannot, for instance, do the *Sanglion*, a special rite performed at death. He thinks it a curse to be a Mun, and hopes his son will never have to be one. In his opinion a Lama is more powerful than a Mun; but the latter is probably more efficient when it is a question of merely driving demons away.

I asked Gongyop if the Padim god was angry when he 756
became a Mun. "No," he said, "the two gods are husband 776
and wife, and the Padim god was glad because the Mun had come to share houses (i.e. Gongyop's body) with him. The Padim god does not call his wife, but is naturally glad when she arrives." The spirits are not always present in his body. When they come he feels a heavy burden, as though he is carrying an immense weight. These particular gods normally live in a place on the other side of Kinchinjunga, which mountain they have to cross to reach him. At the time of their arrival he feels a weight pressing him down. When they are in possession of his body he is able to prophesy. At such 756
times he does not know what he is saying, nor has he after- 787
wards any recollection. He cannot call the spirits up at will 776
and only prophesies twice a year: once in summer and again in winter. He generally feels ill the evening before, and only becomes normal again from cock-crow on the morning following the "possession." He feels heavy and depressed; also he cannot stand noise. He trembles all the time and sweats profusely. During this time he must pray to the gods to find out what must be done. He has no particular feelings at the time of possession; but at the moment when the spirits actually enter his body everything goes black in front of him, after which he remembers no more. He sits cross-legged on the floor making offerings; by his side is a necklace of flowers and a decorated stick known as *Sagyi-patung*. Suddenly he feels as though he is being poked all over with

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756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

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concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776]
the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751]
does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164]
arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

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756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

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came from Tibet, and I presume them to be descendants of 756
the pre-Lamaist priests of that country. I have never come across them in Tibet; neither does Waddell nor Mme. David-Neel make any specific mention of them.* I imagine that they are now found only in the more remote parts of Sikkim, and possibly in Eastern Nepal.

Nunjimu are always women, and their male counterpart is known as Pawo. There is, however, no difference in their functions. When a Nunjimu dies the talent passes to some female member of the family, that of a Pawo to a male; but in neither case does it necessarily pass from parent to child. As in the case of Mun and Padim a person only becomes a Nunjimu or Pawo by means of illness, through some form of temporary madness. These people work by dancing themselves into a trance, after which they are believed to be able to diagnose the cause of an illness. It should be noted, however, that they never prescribe any treatment: having made known the cause of disease its cure is carried out by a Mun or Lama. Their functions have been to a great extent already usurped by the latter and they are only called in when a Mun or Lama has failed to effect a cure.

Tafoor's youngest child had been ill for several weeks with 756
what was undoubtedly whooping-cough. He had carried out 755
various Lamaistic services and had also called in a Mun. Finally, with unexpected forethought, he sent the child away to a neighbouring village, hoping that the change of air might do it good. In spite, however, of all his efforts the child got steadily worse. As a last resort he decided to call in the Nunjimu. We had tried several times to get this old woman to tell us about her work, but she always refused: and on this occasion she warned Tafoor not to let me know what she was doing, or the spirit would refuse to function. He, however, was a sceptic, and had only called her in at the earnest

* Waddell, however, mentions an inferior type of sorcerer known as Lha-Ka, or "God's mouthpiece." They "are found frequently in Western Tibet, and may be females. They somewhat resemble the *Nan-jorma* [*sic*] and Pawo of Sikkim, but are not devil dancers like the latter."

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756 request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was
755 given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*[1] which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from
[778] time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

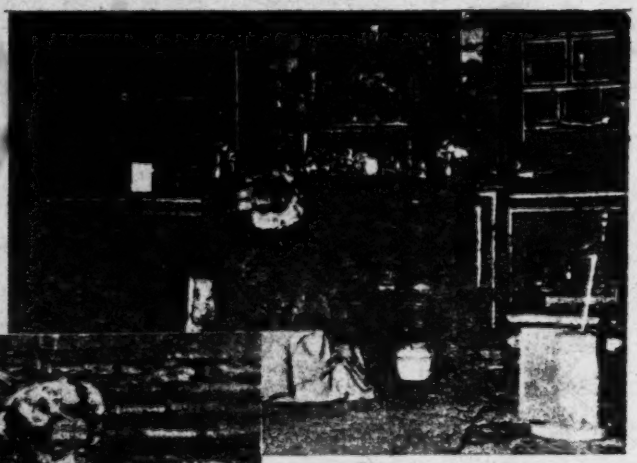
The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer
[523] sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

[1] [i.e., dough cones.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●756

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.



After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu: also the drum and bell which she is holding.

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[facing p. 124]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
[753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 emphatic. I felt as though I was waking out of a heavy sleep:
755 there was a strong desire to yawn, and I noticed that the others did the same. Quite suddenly the drumming ceased; and after a moment of silence one again became aware of other sounds; someone was husking rice outside the house, and fowls were scratching in the veranda. The Nunjimu took up a handful of grain and scattered it on the altar, snatched off her woollen wreath and got up from the floor. The performance was over.

756 While the dance was in progress I had come out from behind my screen and sat down on the floor amongst the others. The Nunjimu now expressed surprise at seeing me, and said that she had been unaware of my presence. This is the only circumstance that makes me feel that perhaps she was in a trance. I was otherwise not at all impressed; nor, I think, was Tafoor. I asked her to come outside and let me take a photograph. Katel told her not to; but she complied willingly, and even danced again for my benefit, roaring with laughter all the time. I got the impression that she did not really believe in the show herself. When it was over no one discussed what she had been saying; nor did she herself ask what the god had said. This was strange in view of the fact that she was presumed not to know what was happening while the spirit was in possession of her body. Although her speech was at times inaudible, the voice in which she spoke was her own. She had none of the tricks of the European medium, and altogether her show was as unimpressive as theirs. In due course the child recovered.

Lepchas sometimes also employ people known as Yaba and Yama, the former being the male. There were none in Lingtem; but from what I have seen of them in other places they appear to be exactly the same as Pawo and Nunjimu. They are said to be very common in Eastern Nepal and are usually members of the Limbu tribe. In Sikkim, they are found only in villages occupied by both Nepalis and Lepchas; and in the same way that the Pawo and Nunjimu were introduced from Tibet probably came to be incorporated

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be 793
convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as 755
healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined.

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated; he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would [576]
have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household.

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[FACING p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
●756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
932 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which
823 is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral
766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and
[756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[16] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭk nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E- (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tuk bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal bgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya ba* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 [78] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 181 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [342] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 144 181 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

● 756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named: amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama- [177] temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth- 756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [153] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a, pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their 533 words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yok* or *Yok-mos* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipol-bo*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.* In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even unknowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the 262 673 lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

[757] * There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

replied that since the woman had herself come and implored /159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible. A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies. When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain. These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more than this he would not say. The same evening, when they /159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother /762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near. His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [157] ●
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell /159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time, but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since /159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

● 757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con- [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall- [757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth, [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

that owing to the heavy rain of the last few days a great deal of the path has disappeared, as a result of which it will take us another two days to reach the monastery. Also, there has been heavy snow on the pass above, so that it is not yet possible to get from Talung over to Lachen. In view of the weather, which shows no signs of abating, everyone thinks the best course is for us to get out of this valley as quickly as possible, and we accordingly left at six-thirty, deciding to make a day of it and go straight through to Mangen, which we eventually reached at six in the evening. It looked at first as though the weather would clear, but by nine it was only too obvious that my mind was definitely not in accord with Tafoor's: it never ceased raining throughout the day. We decided to keep to the far side of the river, as the path was said to be slightly better. It turned out to be little used, as a result of which we appeared at times to be struggling through virgin jungle. It was impossible to keep the leeches away, and after the first hour or so I gave up trying. Whenever we came to an open patch the coolie who was with me took out his knife and scraped them off my legs: they were so thick that they looked like bunches of worms. It was really a waste of time, for five minutes later they were just as thick as before.

By midday we were opposite Lingtem again, where there was another bridge to cross. I had been dreading this all the morning, but actually I found it comparatively easy; having done it once gave one confidence.

We struggled into Mangen just as the mail was arriving. Nothing much to read, except my pass-book, which, as usual, shows me to possess even less than I imagined. I was wet through to the skin and had no change of clothes, so spent the evening dressed in a magnificent fur-lined sort of mandarin's robe of crimson silk, which Palden managed to borrow from a local Kazi. The coolies arrived at ten p.m.

4th June:

I was unable to move yesterday owing to my legs having

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[8] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[8] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATH

i

761 Death is the real enemy of Lepcha life. Disease and hail and failure of crops occupy the Lepchas more emotionally, for these are possibly preventable accidents and against them precautions can be taken. But death is absolute and final and cannot be fought against; some precautions can be taken against a death which has struck one member finding other victims in the community, but against death itself there is nothing to do. Death is too terrible to envisage clearly or discuss often; death, and, to a lesser extent, the dead who have suffered death are hated and feared and not talked about.

764 Once a person is dead there are two things to do; the danger of the devil that has caused his death finding another victim in the community must be averted and the dead man must be got rid of as thoroughly and completely as possible. People who have left this world never return to it benevolently; if they do have any contact with the living it is as malevolent supernaturals, as devils. The older a person grows the less likely is he to hanker after the world he has left and therefore the less he is to be feared; children and young people suddenly torn from their life will surely turn into malevolent devils.

766 The infection and danger of death is strictly local and therefore if a person dies away from home no sort of ceremony is held for him; the body is just unceremoniously thrown into the river. Why should strangers be at the expense of a funeral? No relics will be returned. When the survivors hear of the distant death of a relative they will simply set up prayer flags. They will not hold a *sanglion* (death ceremony), for if the soul has turned into a *moong* it will haunt the place where it died and will not trouble *them*. That the soul of the dear departed will not be able to find its way to the *rumlyang* (paradise) does not matter. The ceremonies

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are performed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should
764 be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787 Maknyam *moong*[11] and will get pains as though the body were pierced, and pains

755 [11] This is the devil which causes death. It acts rather like a vampire; those people whom it kills become in turn Maknyam *moong*. Consequently it is in a way the evil ghost of one's ancestors—since they died by Maknyam *moong* and became it in their turn. At one time it used to be visible; but the *sanyoul koong* (tree) which grew in the mountains was cut down and barred its way; now the devil's body can no longer come out, merely its soul.

[761]

Maknyam *moong* runs in every family, but some families also suffer from Arot maknyam *moong*—the devil which causes violent deaths. Such a family is that of Kaji's (late) first wife. One of her brothers recently fell from a tree; a pregnant woman in the family was crushed by a falling tree.

in the heart and left shoulder, and shortness of breath. The parents should not buy red or white cloth, or bows and arrows, or any sort of animal from other people, or eat the flesh of carrion or drink rock or rain water. Should it survive till the fifth day of Choobu the crisis will be then. Care should be taken not to let it play with knives and other dangerous instruments. The following sacred books should be read: Numchya Chu, Tukzung Chosung, Nangsa Nanget, Dorjé Chu, etc. The Dafloh dance should be performed, incense burned, and holy *tyü* water sprinkled. The Tsatsoh Kyop (stamped *choten*) ceremony should be performed, and also Tsinmu Faat. The child should wear a yellow cloth. Some iron, the head of a chicken and the head of a monkey (? skulls) should be made into a bundle and put on the *kingkoor* (house altar).

For some time there will be many quarrels and general bad temper. (*Aside*: perhaps the baby has been shaken up inside.) All its life long the child will be in danger of death, and that is equally true of its mother. (I think this means that both are threatened by hostile supernaturals, and constant care is needed to ward them off.) Hlamen Djémé (this is the ambivalent supernatural, the god of the Mun, god or demon according as to whether it is pleased or angry) will plague the patient much. The Deut *moong* which is in the house plagues it as severely as if it were the child's mother. The Deut Shagu Kyop (4) ceremony must be performed at once.

The gods and devils are quarrelling over the child's body; should the devils win the child will die. Therefore the ceremonies must be done very properly. The child must avoid water out of rocks or from puddles. Had it not been ill everything it set hand to—trade, crops, animals—would prosper; it would have a life covered with flowers. But (figuratively speaking) a prayer-flag is tottering and must be set upright. Some covetousness (perhaps from a childless woman) has caused the trouble. The child is always in a hurry, inattentive to its parents. Its soul has been taken by Gongbu[12] and Mamoo Deut Tsen[13]

[12] This devil causes swelled stomach. To cure get an ox's horn and fill with rice seed; the lama will hold this and pray silently, and then *pék* the patient and give him some seeds. Butter, meat and *tahi* must be mixed and set fire to, and taken outside.

[13] This is a trinity of supernaturals, consisting of the female Mamoo who is indigo, Deut *moong* who is white and Tsen *moong* who is red.

will give trouble. Maknyam *moong* (11) is in the house, and also a devil Badé which was sent in the time of the father or grandfather. Now the gods are angry and Daphlo should be performed. The child is constantly dreaming of human

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away.

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death.

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol kung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one.

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life

755 778 171 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances, is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 778 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones, all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders [776 171] seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[704] 796 776 778 If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been

[see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782
776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. [761] We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[82c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who [784] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 82c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tzäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tzäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe plö lad chiang gam anam anom aköb ason
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom li ma top sag ni rum sa sag ni tag nam che lat aon
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

nervous and physically thin and rather undersized. He was remarkable for having an almost complete memory of all that had happened to him after the age of eighteen months. Unlike the vast majority of Lepcha children he showed a marked disinclination to grow up, and appeared happiest playing in the company of children younger than himself. His mother died about three years ago, and when he was about six his father committed suicide by eating arrow poison and attempted drowning, after he had been publicly reprimanded by his wife's family for neglecting her while she was ill. After the death of his parents Chélé lived alone with his grandfather and a middle-aged distantly related 'aunt'.

As opposed to Chélé's psychological backwardness his wife, a younger sister of the Mandal's first wife, was somewhat advanced for her age and appeared a fully-developed self-possessed young woman. After the death of her first husband she had gone home to her family for a year, but in May 1937 she returned to take up life with her husband, staying for the time being with her elder sister. Chélé did not want to get married at all, and would run away from his wife whenever he saw her. Old Kahlyeu used to run after him and gave him extremely severe beatings to bring him to his senses; but Chélé was obstinate, and when he was scolded, used to threaten to drown himself in the river. A few children occasionally make such suicide threats when they are publicly reproached or consider themselves ill-used (most of the children I know of who make or have made such threats have exceptional early histories, usually orphans or adopted children) but these threats are never taken seriously and there is no instance of a child putting such threats into action. But with Chélé people are a trifle anxious; he is an abnormal child, with his exceptional intelligence and babyish behaviour.

The situation did not advance in any way while I was observing it. Chélé continued obstinate; his wife seemed fairly placid and non-attached about the whole affair, but even presuming the two do live together the situation is naturally somewhat unstable. A few years ago Takneum *youmi*'s son Itup inherited a wife under rather similar circumstances; when he was twelve his wife became pregnant with an obvious bastard. This wife died young and Itup married again; the bastard, Seryop Katoo, was brought up as a younger brother of Itup. It also occasionally happens, as in the case of Kurma's stepfather, that a man is childless because he has inherited a wife near the menopause.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 frightened of this devil and a great number of Lepchas claim to have heard it cry.

755 762 (3) *To get rid of Chyom moong (that is the devil who causes people to die by falling from a tree or cliff) or Rot moong (that is the devil who causes people to commit suicide).* This ceremony is called Moong Sot, killing the devil, and should be performed by the surviving members of the family in which one member has either died violently or committed suicide. It *should* be performed every three years, but it is sufficient if the ceremony is done after the violent death and at the birth of each new member of the household. If the ceremony is not performed the devil will return and claim another victim.

A dead goat is skinned except for its legs below the joint and is lain on its back with its hind quarters towards the bowman. Beside it is a hole already dug and above it is made a small shelter of bamboos thatched with reeds. Beyond that is set up a red head of banana flower stuck into the ground and against it a post on top of which is attached the goat's heart, in such a way that the blood drips on the banana flower. In a line with this stands a bowman with an arrow in his bow ready to shoot. The Mun is at one side not looking at the post. The other men who are present are all armed with knives.

After a time the Mun starts shivering uncontrollably and summons the devil in a loud voice. As he calls some insect or other will climb up the pole towards the heart, and the bowman must shoot it with his arrow before it reaches it. As soon as he has shot he must call to the Mun to say whether he has hit or missed the insect; if he has missed the Mun must recall it. When the insect is killed it and the goat are chopped to pieces by the bystanders with their knives and buried in the prepared hole; stones and earth are rammed on top of the sacrifice to fill up the hole, and then a second time to make a little mound.

Padem can offer *sakyou faat* and can generally perform some of the simpler exorcisms; there is no general limitation of their power to deal with different devils; it depends entirely on their individual knowledge and capacity. On the whole Padem cannot deal with the more dangerous devils, nor sacrifice animals more important than a chicken or, in a few instances, a goat. The most general form of offering for Padem is the *rum*—the basket filled with various containers. Yaba and Pau, as has been said, can make no sacrifices but can only indicate what sacrifices other priests should make.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

v

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable
to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and
154 self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When
feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity
to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance
the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punish-
ing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of
guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when
the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively
tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the
individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed
may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of
[762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or
less novel; and if the extended family join the community in
exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral
support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the
super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant
physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying
to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the
[673] word, several people told me that the difference between sin and
shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on
your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally
nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin
comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached
for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts
a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning
one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins.
'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil
thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?'
'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked
them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community
said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The
majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said
that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were,
had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning
fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face,
after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him
in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his
mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

window with his back to us for a few minutes, before he went away looking quite different to his usual boisterous self. He did not return home till the evening. On another occasion Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged nineteen, came up to have a wound on his hand dressed, after which he went to the kitchen to have a cup of tea. A little later I sent and asked him to come and talk to me and he sent back a reply that he didn't want to. A couple of days later he returned to have his hand dressed again, and I then asked him why he thought I would give him medicine when he would not come and talk to me? He was almost dumb with embarrassed shame and tried to slink away; I had to employ a good deal of tact before I could get him to accept the medicine. Had I made such a remark in front of witnesses it is quite possible that he would have tried to take poison.

Considering the size of the community suicide is fairly frequent among the Lepchas. There have been six suicides in Lingthem and the neighbouring smaller villages in the last twenty years, and in every case the suicide has been immediately subsequent to a public reproof. In five out of the six cases the suicides were relatively young men; the sixth case was that of a young girl of Panung who drowned herself because her uncle and parents reproved her for her laziness and promiscuity. Chélé's father killed himself because his wife and her family publicly blamed him for neglecting her and his work while she was ill. Kurma's uncle killed himself because he was blamed for not keeping his wife in order, and Kurma's brother because he was blamed for his uncle's suicide.[8] The possibility of suicide from grief is admitted, but the only case I heard of was of a woman in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum who killed herself shortly after the death of her husband, and the details of this case were not properly known. Women kill themselves by drowning, men usually with the aconite poison they use on their arrows.

Besides the successful suicides there have been a number of suicide attempts which have been thwarted. It seems to me probable that a Lepcha can establish his innocence on a specific charge by going through the gestures of committing suicide in such situations that he is bound to be saved; some stories of attempted suicide which I heard seemed to me not to have been intended seriously; they were theatrical performances arranged in such a manner as to convince everybody of the sincerity of the libelled person without

[8] See Part Three for fuller details, Chapter Fifteen, p. 396–397.

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●762 actually endangering his life.[6] One of the reasons for believing in the guilt of Hlatam the 'poisoner' was that both she and her son Aga must have been aware of what was said about them and neither had demonstrated their innocence by attempting to kill themselves.

Verbal threats of suicide are occasionally made, but they are taken little notice of. When they are drunk Dunbi, because he is poor, and Katel, because his second wife won't sleep with him, threaten to kill themselves. Children also occasionally threaten to kill themselves if they think they are unjustly scolded or ill-treated; when he was young Pembu, an exceptionally nervous man, used to make such threats, and Chano's younger son, who was brought up by an 'aunt' also does so occasionally; to such threats the parents retort that nobody wants such a naughty child.[7]

626 With this ever-present possibility of provoking shame and even suicide it can be seen that malicious gossip and scandal assume very considerable emotional importance. People are worried as to what their neighbours are saying about them behind their backs; one or two even said that the reason for having '*ingzong*' (special friends) in one's own village was so that if people spoke ill of you you would have somebody whom you can completely trust to tell you what is being said. My impression is that very little scandal is spoken, and that when people did discuss potentially scandalous or disagreeable situations they did so very seriously and with hushed voices, taking care that no children or ignorant neighbours should listen to what they were saying.

626 157 The potential influence of hostile talk has I think further results: it is a very strong sanction to encourage Lepchas to conform to the approved methods of behaviour; and it also makes people chary of expressing judgements about their neighbours. If you ask a Lepcha who in his village has any outstanding quality, whether good or bad, he will almost certainly reply that everybody is much of a muchness. In many ways I think this does represent the real Lepcha attitude; affection is based on mutual services, not on emotion, and consequently difference in character is of much less importance than difference of treatment. Only character traits strongly opposed to Lepcha ideals were spontaneously commented on, and those seldom; cruelty, avarice, untruthfulness,

[6] For an example of this see the story of the attempted suicide of Jiroong's sister in Chapter Sixteen, p. 428.

[7] See also the history of Chélé's threats of suicide; Chapter Six, pp. 164–165.

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X159 steadfastly to accompany them home and they then ordered me to take a grinding stone from Lik to Passo at Panung. A couple of days later I and my elder brother took the grinding stones over; my elder brother carried the top stone. We deposited them in a cattle shed without going near the house or seeing Passo. I hated him.' ('To-day he is blind,' *Kurma added exultingly when he told this story.*)

'A month later Passo came with Pashet to reclaim me. At that time the second Dorjé Lapoon was performing the *chéné* (ceremony) for the buckwheat harvest. Passo said to me "I have never done you wrong; come back with me." I replied "No; you have treated me badly; though you are my maternal uncle[9] and my adopting father you have used me ill." Passo said this was not true. I reminded him of the time long past when he had said to me "You need not stop here any longer; you can go away now. My younger brother has got a son Apot." I remembered too in my heart how when Apot was three or four Cherim his father had insulted me and had tried to drive me away. For all these reasons I refused to return with Passo.'

Suicide of elder brother, Ahyok.

X159 'About a year after I had returned home my elder brother, Ahyok, committed suicide. These are the reasons for it. We had ●762 two paternal uncles,[10] of whom at first only the elder was married and the younger one used to sleep with his wife: but the elder brother disliked this so he arranged and paid for the marriage of the younger brother. But this new bride did not like her husband; instead she fell in love with Ahyok and used to go to visit him and sleep with him.[11] Then the elder uncle reproached the younger,

[9] Kurma's paternal great-grandfather's mother and Passo's paternal great-grandfather were brother and sister.

[10] These uncles were actually Kurma's second cousins; their father was the elder brother of Kurma's father's father. There was a considerable difference of age between them.

[11] Both these situations are culturally allowed for. What was scandalous was the wife expressing obvious and open preference for somebody not her husband. From the time of Kurma's father's death the elder 'uncle' had been married and the younger brother sleeping with his wife and this had gone on perfectly peacefully. But then this first wife of the elder 'uncle' had died and he had then married the 'niece' of his first wife who was very considerably younger than her husband or her brother-in-law. It was for this girl that the quarrels between the brothers started.

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saying "Why don't you keep your wife in order? She is always 159x
going down shamelessly to your nephew's house." At this the two
uncles quarrelled and the younger one committed suicide by 762
taking poison. But this only started the trouble. The surviving uncle said to Ahyok "This death is your fault and you must pay all the expenses of the funeral ceremonies." Ahyok protested that it was not his fault; his aunt used to come to visit him; how was he responsible? and anyhow he had no money. But the uncle insisted and a meeting was held of the Mandal and *youmi*. To this meeting Ahyok went taking with him a pig, fifteen rupees and a load of *chi*. I stopped at home with my Mother. My brother admitted that he used to sleep with the woman and the meeting decided that he must pay for the funeral expenses and ignored his plea of poverty.

'Then my brother returned home and went up to the loft and took there the poison *took-ra-kyet nyung* which is used in hunting[22] and swallowed it. Then he came down and said "Those people say I must pay for what is not my fault; so I shall die." He came down in front of the house and walked about backwards and forwards. I asked him what was the matter and caught hold of him as he walked backwards and forwards. Then my brother drew his [412]
chimli (*a pointed knife which is worn in front of the body at the waist*) and cried "Come on! Come on! I will kill all who come near me." Then I caught hold of his right hand and Mother took the other; he made a lunge at my Mother and nearly killed her but I pulled him back in time. I finally managed to wrench the knife from his hand and then with my Mother's help pushed him on to the ground. I forced his mouth open and saw that his tongue was swelling and his hands were clenched; so I knew he had taken poison. I sent our younger brother to get the root of wild raspberry and hens' droppings; the root was pounded and mixed with the droppings and given him as an emetic, but it was too late and he died.'[23]

[22] 'People also wear a tiny quantity wrapped up in a thick cloth attached to their clothing near their heart as a protection against devils.'

[23] The fact of the suicide is independently confirmed by a great number of people though the reasons which caused it are somewhat different. Jiroong thought that he committed suicide because he was reproved for not working in the fields but instead going into the forest to look for wild tubers. Tafoor knew that the suicide was caused by the inability of some man to control his wife after he had been warned and thought Ahyok's suicide directly followed

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X/159 *First marriage.*

'My stepfather was the younger brother of Gongyop-bo (father of Gongyop). Gongyop's father had a daughter who had been married to Dunbi's elder brother by whom she had a son Shashoo. She was fourteen years older than me. When her husband died she refused to take Dunbi as *oong-op* as she did not like him and returned to live with her father. She came to visit her uncle, my stepfather, when I was eighteen; we loved one another and she stopped a year with me. But although she loved me she did not want to go and live at Lik; my family was poor and hers comparatively rich and she did not get on too well with my stepfather. So I went to live with her, spending the time between her and my home. The arrangement was made by the Mandal. My wife's brothers did not want to give their sister to a poor man and therefore would not accept the usual substitutes for the "bride price" and I had no money for the proper ceremonies. Besides myself and my wife and my stepson there were also living in the house Gongyop's father and mother and Gongyop and his wife and son. While I lived in that house I was treated like a brother. I had some property of my own at Lik and we all ate together in common. I was sorry that my wife would not go with me to my own home; this was because I had not paid for her.'

Illness.

'When I was about twenty-one I and my wife were living in the field house. One night at midnight I fell seriously ill. The next morning my wife and her son went to work in the fields while I lay on the floor feeling suffocated so that I could hardly breathe. I called my wife but she did not come. Then I started getting delirious and I am not quite sure whether in fact or not I saw the Lharibu Chujen come and talk to me. A little time before I had bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong for four rupees and it was hanging by a string over my head. When I saw the Lharibu I asked him "Where are you going? I am very ill." The Lharibu said "I have come to ask you how much you paid for that earring from Jiroong?" "Four rupees." "That is quite a fair price" he

[762] the suicide of the husband. These different views do not seem to me to invalidate Kurma's story in any way. The event took place nearly twenty years ago on the other side of the river.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopön was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding
[593] life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

[837] After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's
● [762] elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re-
[682] sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

replied that since the woman had herself come and implored /159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible.
A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to
give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to
be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies.
When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a
load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain.
These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he
said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more
than this he would not say. The same evening, when they /159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother /762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some
minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about
being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly
raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into
the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and
then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself
with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand
and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near.
His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand
and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him
to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried
to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his
tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly
clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He
shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some
wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [757]
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together
and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this
time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a
few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell /159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a
man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time,
but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since /159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep. 159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled 763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159
a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763
had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159
house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764
now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159
even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848]
was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATH

i

761 Death is the real enemy of Lepcha life. Disease and hail and failure of crops occupy the Lepchas more emotionally, for these are possibly preventable accidents and against them precautions can be taken. But death is absolute and final and cannot be fought against; some precautions can be taken against a death which has struck one member finding other victims in the community, but against death itself there is nothing to do. Death is too terrible to envisage clearly or discuss often; death, and, to a lesser extent, the dead who have suffered death are hated and feared and not talked about.

764 Once a person is dead there are two things to do; the danger of the devil that has caused his death finding another victim in the community must be averted and the dead man must be got rid of as thoroughly and completely as possible. People who have left this world never return to it benevolently; if they do have any contact with the living it is as malevolent supernaturals, as devils. The older a person grows the less likely is he to hanker after the world he has left and therefore the less he is to be feared; children and young people suddenly torn from their life will surely turn into malevolent devils.

766 The infection and danger of death is strictly local and therefore if a person dies away from home no sort of ceremony is held for him; the body is just unceremoniously thrown into the river. Why should strangers be at the expense of a funeral? No relics will be returned. When the survivors hear of the distant death of a relative they will simply set up prayer flags. They will not hold a *sanglion* (death ceremony), for if the soul has turned into a *moong* it will haunt the place where it died and will not trouble *them*. That the soul of the dear departed will not be able to find its way to the *rumlyang* (paradise) does not matter. The ceremonies

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766 to be described later are more for a protection for the living than as a help for the dead. Only if a young child were to die away from its home would the ceremony of Dek Flee[1] be held to keep away its haunting demon.

775 It is at death and the ceremonies which surround death that the beliefs and ritual of the Mun and lamas most obviously clash
764 and contradict one another. Both creeds hold that the soul outside the body is lost in some dangerous region through which it must be conducted; and therefore representatives of both creeds help to conduct the soul away. But the soul's destination on these wanderings is completely different; for the lama the soul wanders for forty-nine days in a sort of purgatory, after which it is judged and rewarded and sent on to its next incarnation, whether it be on the earth as another human being or as an animal or to heaven for a period of blessedness or to hell for a period of torment. For the Mun the soul is conducted to the *rumlyang*, where it is born again as a tiny child, very often of a different sex to its former life; in the *rumlyang* the child grows up to maturity and leads a happy and immortal life among all the other dead, a life similar to that here on earth except that there is no death or disease or want.

The implicit contradictions in these beliefs are realised in the case of lamas and nuns, for whom the Mun perform no ceremonies; the souls of lamas and nuns are not led to the *rumlyang* but conducted through the *bardo* or purgatory. But for laymen ceremonies of both religions are held simultaneously; the lamas perform inside the house while the Mun does his ceremonies outside.

764 There are three alternative methods of disposing of a corpse; it may be burnt, buried, or thrown into the river. Which method
766 is adopted depends partly on the condition of the deceased and partly on the lama's horoscopes. The lamas and nuns are never buried; they are almost always burnt unless they die in the wet season, in which case their bodies are thrown into the river. Laymen are never burnt; whether they are buried or thrown into the river depends on the lama's horoscope; the greater number are buried. Young children should always be thrown into the river, but occasionally an exception is made; thus Patek's mother when she lost in rapid succession four children in infancy burnt the body of the last one in anger and as a protest at the way the supernaturals were treating her; but such behaviour is extremely uncommon.

764 As soon as a person dies the position in which he has expired

[1] Vide sub, p. 352–353.

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764

and the hour thereof is noted and told to a competent lama, who then consults the book, *Dessu*, in which are specially drawn diagrams for each calendric[illegible]ision and body position. These diagrams show in which direction the corpse should be removed for disposal; this is never on any account through the door, but may be through either the walls or the floor; a hole is made especially for this purpose which will be filled up immediately after the body has been taken away. The lama also casts the dead man's horoscope[3] from which is learnt the supernatural causes of his death and the ceremonies which must be performed by his survivors to help the dead man and ward off his fate from the living. The horoscope also indicates what sort of people—that is people born in what year—should attend to and carry the corpse and whither the devil which has caused this man's death has gone and whom it menaces next. Also if this devil has been brought by some object this object is designated so that it can receive ritual cleansing. On the day of the death of an adult and also on the day of the disposal of the body and the disposal of the ashes from the burnt paper face nobody in the village should work.

Lamas are summoned immediately after death to help the soul of the man to find heaven by giving him advice and showing to the corpse pictures of the devils and perils which he is likely to encounter. If the dead man is a lama the corpse is tied to a pole along the back; the knees are bent up to the body and held by a length of cloth; the head is propped up with a stick and the hands are joined with the palms together as in prayer. After the first day the corpse is placed in a big copper pot (after the cremation this pot is returned to its normal use after being given a thorough wash). In front of the corpse is placed a small table on which are arranged three water-containers, two dishes of rice and a *chimi*; beyond this is placed another table on which all the sorts of food which the dead man used to eat in his lifetime are placed; the food is changed at every meal and the old food is taken away and can be eaten by anyone. This preliminary ceremony lasts for one, three or seven days, according to the wealth of the deceased's family; however long the ceremony continues the lamas who are watching and instructing the dead man must not sleep at all. The others can and do sleep, often in the same room as the corpse; the corpse soon starts to stink even though it is anointed with butter mixed with cloves, nutmeg and camphor and dressed in clean clothes.

[3] See Appendix III, c.

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764 While the corpse is in the house the people of that household must not eat salt or butter.

The corpse of a layman is also doubled up in the same way, but the hands are crossed on the breast and the head is allowed to flop. The body is put in a big openwork basket. Usually for a layman there is only one day's wait between death and burial, but occasionally people will wait three days. A layman also is instructed and advised by lamas, but at the same time the Mun who will perform the *sanglion* and any other benevolent people who know how to are helping the corpse on the road to the *rumlyang* by meditation—*munthen*.

ii

764 Before the body of a lama or nun is carried out of the house a pyre must be prepared; this consists of a square pile about
766 seven feet high, with eight layers of wood if the deceased is a man and nine if a woman. The pyre must be made of the wood of one of two designated trees and must not be composed of more than three trees; the first tree of all must be cut down by the nearest available male relation of the deceased. The place where the pyre is made and its direction in relation to the house of the dead man will have been indicated by the lamas' horoscope; there are about half a dozen burning and burial places around Lingthem in more or less every direction; they are all removed some way away from any habitation and are placed on uncultivable spurs of land. The hour at which the corpse should be removed and also the year of birth of the people carrying the corpse are designated by the horoscope.

The journey from the house to the pyre must be made without a break. The body is put on the pyre seated to face west—that is towards Kinchenjunga. If the dead person is a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy, just before the corpse is placed on the pyre or in the grave the body is ripped open so that the navel-cord is torn and the foetus is placed on the mother's lap. This can be done by anybody who has sufficient courage. Then all the male relations of the deceased stand at all four sides of the pyre and set fire to it simultaneously. If the corpse has left a widow or widower a portion of that person's hair is cut off and burnt at the same time as the body. It is essential that every piece of wood and bone should be burnt to ashes; if necessary the corpse will be broken up to this end. About 8 lbs. of butter, a big basket of rice and all sorts of other

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grain are burnt with the corpse; a sort of long-handled shovel is used to make these offerings and they are thrown on to the pyre a little at a time, the officiating lama counting out loud and finishing up with a shout. The lama counts up to five ten times, up to seven five times and up to eight ten times. A pig, or very occasionally an ox, is killed at the house and this is put on to the pyre as food for the corpse after the corpse has been consumed. This animal is not usually consumed completely but merely cooked; the people who gathered the wood for the pyre are given this meat as their fee; if there is no meat they are given money. The relations of the dead man must stay by the pyre until the ashes are quite extinct. 764 766

All the unrelated people who have accompanied the family to the burning place are given a meal of rice, and a small gift of money —usually one or two annas—is given to a representative of each household present. Similar presents are also given to those who attend a burial if the mourners can afford it. On the way back from the disposal of a corpse a small bonfire is built for the mourners to jump over, and a knife or some other piece of iron is put in the doorway of the house for people to step over; both these precautions are taken to disinfect the mourners from the possible magical contagion of death. [783]

Except that the corpse is not dressed and anointed in the house, but only when it is brought to the place designated for burial, the preliminaries for burial are exactly the same as those for burning. The corpse is carried in the basket to the burial place by one man, a near relation if possible; a husband must always carry his wife and a son his mother. As well as the friends and relations of the deceased a Mun accompanies the buriers. When the party arrive at the chosen site the corpse is placed on the ground and is washed and anointed with the mixture of butter, cloves, nutmeg and camphor, and wrapped in a new cloth which is arranged so as to cover the face. Then a circular grave about the height of a man is dug; a big stone is put at the bottom and the sides are lined with stones and four ropes are placed against the four corners. While these preparations are being made the surviving spouse or eldest son will stay by the corpse and talk to it saying: 'We are preparing this new house for you.' The body is put into the grave still sitting in the basket, orientated to face Kinchenjunga; then on the top of the grave and corpse is put a big flat stone and on the top of that four cooking stones supporting another flat stone. On the top of this is placed a little white stone which serves as an indication that the place is a 764

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 grave and should not be touched. When all is in place the four ropes are pulled away simultaneously. The Mun then ceremoniously cleanses the hands of the bearers with a pot of strained *chi* and a bristle brush.

For disposal by water all the early preparations are the same except that a lama goes with the burial party and before the body is put into the river offers *cherkem*—that is strained *chi* with grain floating in it—to the supernaturals of the water. The basket is put into the water first and then the body, head downwards; it is pushed out with a forked stick under the arm-pits and floats away. In the case of a small child the body and the basket are thrown away without any sort of ceremony. No gifts are put in the grave or thrown into the river; the corpse has merely its new cloth and the basket. In all forms of disposal of the body the knees are fastened to the body by a cloth.

iii

After the disposal of the corpse there are still two actions which must be performed: the getting rid of the devil which has caused the death and the safe conducting of the dead man's soul well out of the world. The order in which these are performed depends on whether the horoscope has divined that the death is caused by Sandé *moong*, or by Shidook *moong* or by Arot *moong* (death by violence). If the death has been caused by Sandé *moong* the disinfecting ceremony is performed immediately after the removal of the corpse and before the *sanglion*—that is to say the speeding of the dead man's soul; the other ceremonies are performed about two months after death.

764 778 To remove Sandé *moong* the presence of two lamas is necessary, one to read the sacred books and one to perform the necessary actions. On a rectangular board they construct out of powdered grain and water a life-sized Cat with a very long tail with a horse's saddle on its back and a relatively smaller rider on it; in front are two more men, behind two more. Three triple strands of coloured thread are put round the Cat's neck, one of which is held by the rider and the others by the two men in front. These images are decorated with various sacred and symbolical devices made out of wood and thread and there are offerings of crops. Besides this object, one big and two smaller torches are prepared and also some heaps of small pebbles and dried buckwheat powder, mixed with rotted bamboo (here called 'dust').

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When all is prepared the lama reads the book Sandé Kangyour; while this is being read a layman offers *cherkem*. When the reading is finished the Cat is turned round towards the door and a path of powdered 'dust' made for it. Then the real expulsion starts. The lama throws 'dust' on to the torches to make them flare; pebbles are thrown into the corners of the room. Then all the neighbours and friends who are present take the weapons they have provided themselves with—axes, knives, hammers, or for women the heavy weaving shuttles or sickles—and start beating in every corner of the house. Others armed with the torches go round the village, or at any rate to the neighbouring houses, and some with their weapons go and beat in corners of adjoining houses. Still others accompany the Cat, which is carried a little way along a path and then upset. Should its head turn towards the house there will be another death in the village. Those who accompany the Cat whistle and shout 'Ya-Ho-o-o' and throw stones and beat around with their weapons.

If it has been found from the horoscope that the death infection was brought in some object in the house, this object is taken away with the Cat and left on the path. A couple of days later it is taken back, thoroughly cleaned and re-taken into use.

When all taking part in the devil-chasing have gone out of the house those who remain shut the door. By the door is a big copper vessel full of water from a stream with a woman beside it. After the Cat has been upset the carriers return shouting '*Hla-gélo : dé pam*' (God has conquered and the devil been defeated'). The woman will sprinkle with the water all who have gone outside; only then will the door be reopened and the people given strained *chi* which has been prepared for them by those who stayed inside.

If the death is discovered to have been caused by Shidook *moong*, the ceremony of *shidook kyop* is performed about two months after the death. For this ceremony it is necessary to kill an animal, either an ox or a goat, and the offering is made on the skin of this animal, of which the head and forelegs are left unskinned and attached. In the centre of this skin is made a 'throne' of a mound of earth in tiers, on which is placed a black 'devil's palace' or *deu* of thread; in the four corners are four small images of dough stamped with butter and decorated; below them are thirteen smaller images on stands, to which are given thirteen bamboo bows-and-arrows, thirteen knives, thirteen sickles and thirteen black 'devil's

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764 palaces'.[3] In front of all these is placed a special plate of pottery made with nine handles; this is left empty. The ceremonial is the same as for Sandé *moong*.

If the deceased has met his death by violence, that is through Arot *moong*, the ceremony of Tikar Sangyour has to be performed. After a death by violence has occurred in a family the descendants should keep up the ceremony yearly for ever, for violent death is infectious and hereditary; it can also be performed apotropaically. The path by which a corpse, who has died violently, has been carried should be avoided; and at the *sanglion* of such people no raw meat is given, but only cooked meat, as raw meat will carry the infection. Tafoor performs this ceremony because his grandfather fell from a height and was drowned; so do Ongden, Nariya, the Mandal (although in his case this is precautionary) and many others.

764 On a block of wood one large and four small images of a horse with a rider are made of millet powder coloured red. In front of 778 this is a black image of the female supernatural Mamoo *moong*, and in front of her an inflated animal's bladder. In front of this again is a *chimi* and at the four corners are four pots containing respectively scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison, and water from five rivers. There are also small offerings of grain and various decorations. While the special sacred book is being read *cherkem* is offered. When the offering is carried out a torch is laid down on top of it facing in the same direction; on top of this are placed leaves of wormwood and a stone on top of that.

766 In the case of a child dying before the age of about ten none of the ceremonies described above are performed nor is a *sanglion* made for it. Instead of these the ceremony of Dek Flee is performed by a Mun three days after death. For this ceremony a goat is required and also a tray covered with a black cloth on which is put samples of every sort of grain and a bundle of seven pieces of wood tied up with reed; besides that a bundle of elephant grass and other prickly plants are needed. The ceremony is performed inside the house.

The goat is tethered to a pole and a second rope made out of reed with three knots in it is tied round the goat's neck. This the Mun and all the members of the household in turn touch, and then the Mun throws the rope forward out of the house door three times. If by any chance the knot should point inwards there will be another

[3] Thirteen, being an odd number, is lucky.

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death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some 766
firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *péks* the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*tiklyong-kup*) is set up [831]
between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time.

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* 764
all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*.

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the 764
dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn 778
a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine

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764 loops on the circumference[4] and NI in Tibetan script inscribed in the middle. On this is set a bamboo *patyoot* about a cubit high
778 and a little broader than that usually employed for *chi* drinking, with a rupee in the bottom and filled with grain; into this is stuck an upright bamboo of the height of the corpse when sitting and at shoulder height is an inserted cross-piece the width of the dead person's shoulders. On top of this is placed a piece of paper supported on a square stretcher: this is stamped with a die representing a divine face; it is the same for all ages and conditions, but different for each sex; it is inscribed with the name of the dead person. Then this dummy is clothed with the clothes of the dead person so arranged as to look as if it was sitting with the legs crossed and feet hidden and hands folded. A big scarf which has to be borrowed or bought for the occasion is draped from the image's behind up the back and over the face, so that the paper mask is hidden.

This image is placed in the *dé-ong* facing the lamas, who sit on the right of the altar; in front of the image are three tables. On the first table are seven small cones of rice, seven *chimi*, two pots of water and two pots of rice; on the second table is a plate and cup and all sorts of food; on the third are the dead person's jewels, if it was a woman, or the knife and bow-and-arrows if a man. A little to the left before the first table is a *patyoot* of *chi*; behind and also to the left must sit the Mourner—the surviving spouse if there is one, or failing that any near relation. The Mourner only has to be present when the image is given food or talked to. Except right at the end other ordinary people do not come into the *dé-ong*.

764 If the dead man was a lama all the lamas of the neighbourhood will come automatically; if he was a layman only two are necessary, a Dorjé Lapoon and a *kané*. Old and experienced men are allowed to sit with the lamas. A certain number of nuns with their prayer-wheels are necessary; they sit against the wall opposite the altar.

[556] The length of the ceremony depends on the wealth of the deceased. If he was a poor man it will only last twenty-four hours; if he was rich, up to seven days. The *chi* offered to the corpse is changed three times daily, the food twice; each meal must have some meat in it and also tea, rice and all vegetable foods. When the meal

[4] There would seem to be a connection between this nine-looped circle, and the nine-handled cup used in the ritual to expel Shidook *moong*, but I could not learn what this connection is.

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764

is presented to the image the lamas address it, saying: 'Do not think of this world; we are giving you all the food you used to eat when you were alive; take it and *go.*' On these occasions the Mourner must be present. When the food in front of the image is removed it is eaten by those present who are not of the immediate family of the deceased; it is not thought to have lost any virtue or to be in any way dangerous.

The lamas have to read five sacred books; all read the same passage at the same time. Simultaneously there are six books which the nuns should read; those who cannot read turn their prayer-wheels. The whole time the reading is going on the lamas and nuns must not sleep; they may at intervals go outside for a respite, but they must never settle down to sleep. If all the books have to be read in a day and a night they have to hurry; if there is more time, they can go more leisurely; if the books are finished they start again at the beginning. The family, other than the Mourner, and their friends spend their time in the kitchen eating and drinking and talking and sleeping.

When the reading is finished all the relations gather. A specially clean plate is placed in front of the Dorjé Lapoon. Then the Dorjé Lapoon addresses the soul of the dead man telling it that everything has been done for it and that it has found its way to paradise, and then the *kané* takes off the paper head and hands it to the Dorjé Lapoon who holds it in his left hand; in his right he holds a big *chimi* and lights the paper from the bottom so that the ashes fall on to the plate. While the paper is burning all present shout 'Hep' three times in a loud voice, which signifies that the soul has got to heaven. The *kané* prepares a ball of reed ash mixed with water; the paper ashes are inserted therein and then placed in a *choten* mould into which a little oil has been poured. The ashes are rammed down and taken out in the form of a small *choten.* This *choten* the Dorjé Lapoon sprinkles with holy water (*tyü*); after which a hole is made in the bottom of the ash *choten* with a stick and a few grains of rice are pushed in and a gold and silver ornament are symbolically scraped with a knife over it. This *choten* is placed on the altar. In the case of ordinary people it is taken away the next day by the head of the household and put either in the river or in a cave or on a rock. If, however, the deceased was a lama of exceptional holiness a big stone *choten* will be made; some of the dust from his bones from the funeral pyre are placed in the foundations and the small *choten* is put in the centre.

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764 When the ceremony is finished the clothes of the deceased are divided among the lamas; the Dorjé Lapoon gets the best coat and the *omzets* the other garments. Before these are worn the lama will hold some mustard seeds in his hand and pray silently; he will then throw the seeds on the clothes; this is considered sufficient disinfection; after that the garment is washed and can then be worn or sold. In the case of a dead lama his skull-drum and bell goes to the Dorjé Lapoon and his rosary to the officiating *kané*; the *kané* also gets the *patyoot* with the rupee and grain inside, the dead man's plate and cup, and the big scarf which covered the face of the image. At a lama's *sanglion* the nuns are given a rupee a head and a maund of grain between them, and the lamas are given Rs. 20 and three maunds of grain to divide. For a layman's *sanglion* the gifts are usually considerably less.

The day after the *sanglion* is finished the place where the body was disposed of is visited by some near relations of the deceased to see if there are any footprints in the near neighbourhood which would indicate that the dead man had reincarnated as an animal. The footprints of cats, dogs and tigers do not indicate reincarnation; they merely show that a devil has passed by in this form, and I never heard any actual incident of the prints of any other animal being discovered.

If everything consumed in this *sanglion* were paid for in cash it would represent an expense of over Rs. 200, for a continuous feast with meat has to be provided for all present. If the survivors are poor everybody will bring contributions of money and food. The ceremony is absolutely necessary to free the soul of the dead man [775] from devils and lead it to heaven. Were it omitted the soul would wander miserably on earth, doing harm to the survivors, and eventually reincarnating as a worm or some noisome insect or beast of prey.

Money should be distributed to the monasteries in the name of the dead man; if he was a poor man it need only be given to the three monasteries of Zongu, but if he was rich to the monasteries all over Sikkim.

It is considered desirable that the Mun *sanglion* should take place on the same day as the disposal of the corpse. If, however, the lamas' *sanglion* is postponed that of the Mun may be also. Very few Mun know how to perform the death ceremony; in Lingthem the only one who knew how to was old Pumri and she was never employed as it was not considered suitable for a woman to perform

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the ceremony. Usually an old Mun from a village farther up the valley was summoned for the purpose. Gongyop said that he knew how to, but he was lazy and did not want to perform the ceremony and therefore did not get his qualification (*loong*). 764

Before the Mun comes out of his house to perform the ceremony he will spend the night communing and calling on the gods to help him conduct the soul to heaven; in particular he will call on Hit-*rum* and Dé-*rum*, the ancestral gods, and such ancestors of the deceased as have died in the same way as the present man. The Mun is accompanied by a friend or assistant called Mun-tyol.

After the funeral a pig is killed and one of its trotters is put aside on a wooden tray for the ceremony. The following articles—all very small—are also prepared inside the house and put on the tray: two ladders made out of the wood used for arrows, which are placed on either side of a tiny log, two small torches, one dish of rice mixed with charcoal and pebbles, a comb and a bristle brush. There is also prepared separately a rope of bamboo bark about twelve feet long and also 80 lbs. of *chi*, 40 lbs. of rice, and strained *chi* in a filtering bag. When all is prepared everybody in the house goes outside into the yard, except the lamas who stay inside reading their books. First of all the Mun takes the knife of the deceased (or, if the corpse was a woman, her sickle) and starts cutting the weeds in the courtyard. If there are many weeds others will help after the Mun has started. When the space is cleared the mourners have a meal; the Mun sits aside and is merely given *chi* to drink. An animal, preferably an ox, is brought in and offered to the devils who are plaguing the dead man's soul in order to induce them to desist; then the ox is killed by some unrelated layman and skinned and cut up. The intestines are boiled.

While the ox is cooking a shed is made for the Mun out of bamboo mats suspended from a post; to this post the cooked intestines are tied. (These are taken away in the morning by the Mun-tyol.) A little way in front of this is another post of a special sort of wood to which is attached the rope of bamboo bark; two knots are tied in it, the one nearer the post being for the devils, the farther one for the gods. The other end of this rope is held during the whole ceremony by the Mun and is finally severed with a pointed knife after the Mun has communicated with the dead.

The household sends out to the Mun a dish of boiled rice and a portion of the ox's ribs cut in two—one part for the Mun and the other for the Mun-tyol—and also black and white sausages.

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764 Generally the Mun only eats the rice, the meat being taken away in the morning with the other presents.

There is also prepared a dish of all the sorts of food—dried bird and fish, ginger, different sorts of grain and fruits and roots and *chi*—that the deceased used to eat.

When everything is ready the Mun retires to the shed with his assistant. The rest of the people sit around but not so near that they can hear what is going on. Before retiring the Mun puts on a special head-dress of white cloth arranged like a turban with in the centre porcupine quills and tigers' whiskers and at the side peacock's feathers. The Mun now starts to *munthen* and calls on the dead man's soul, always holding the rope in the left hand. When he has got into communication with the dead man he starts giving him advice and help. When the Mun starts talking to the soul of the deceased the Mun-tyol sends for the tray which was prepared in the house and these objects are given to the soul by means of throwing them out of the shed (no notice is taken of them after) with instructions how to use them. First the soul is given the rice with the charcoal and pebbles in it; he is told to eat the rice and leave the charcoal and stones; the devils, pursuing and hungry, will pick over the stones for food and give him time to escape. Then he is given the ladders and torches to help him. With their aid he will be able to climb over the log which will block the way of the devils. He is also told to throw behind him the brush and comb which will grow into huge fences and block the devils' way.

Now the dead man's soul is coming near; when the Mun-tyol sees the signs that it is approaching he sends for the collection of food which has been prepared and this is offered to the dead man with the words: 'All these foods which you used to eat when you were alive you can have now.' Then suddenly the Mun 'dies'; he falls and his assistant catches him. The Mun's soul has departed from his body and in its place is the soul of the dead man who speaks through the Mun's lips: he speaks very slowly and in a very soft voice; it is not the voice of the Mun nor is it the voice of the dead man.[5] The Mun-tyol will then question the dead man, saying: 'Tell us what devils are troubling you; tell us how you died.' Then the dead man will say the cause of his death, whether it was caused directly by a devil or whether it was through

[5] Gongyop said that this possession is not so complete as the prophetic possession described by him in Chapter Eight; the dead man's soul does not enter the body of the Mun but 'sits on his shoulders'.

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the intervention of some human enmity, either *mik-jit* (envy and cursing) or the direct sending of a devil.[6]

When the dead man has said what was the cause of his death he leaves the body of the Mun, who recovers and cuts the rope between the two knots, so that the devil's knot is left attached to the post, with the pointed knife that he has held in his right hand all the time. He then conducts the soul to the *rumlyang*, where all the dead live; he will find there a house prepared with bedding and all utensils; he will lead the soul into it and lock it in. This ends the Mun *sanglion* and in the morning the Mun goes home, taking with him his presents; they consist of the meat already mentioned, a leg of beef, Rs. 5 (or at any rate Rs. 3), the dead man's knife, or sickle, and one complete set of his clothes. These he wears or gives to his wife. The rest of the dead man's clothes are divided up among the children six months after death; they are washed three times and fumigated with incense before wearing. No danger is attached to them. The dead man's name is used for the ceremony and is not avoided afterwards.

It will be more convenient to finish the description of the Mun's ceremony here. One year after the original *sanglion* the Mun will go into a trance again, though an even lighter one this time, and visit the *rumlyang* once more. Outside the house in which the soul of the dead man is enclosed Hit-*rum* will be standing on guard; for him will be offered presents of *chi* and butter and sugar-cane and fruits and flowers and roots of many different sorts. After this the Mun unlocks the door of the house and finds a little baby inside; to this baby he presents a dress suitable to its sex. (The Mun is provided with two cloths, one for a boy and one for a girl, as it is by no means certain into which sex the dead person will reincarnate.) When the Mun has opened the door the baby comes outside and lives with the other people in the *rumlyang* who are his ancestors; the baby will grow up as human beings do and when

[6] I asked whether, if the death was caused by human agency, the survivors ought to try to take any revenge? The answers were somewhat confused (a) No, they should not because they could not be certain that it is true. (b) If they were not able to deal with the devil before it caused the man's death they would not be able to deal with it after. While the man was alive they should try and send the devil back to the original sender. (c) They can try to please the devil which has caused the death by giving it presents and induce it to return and smite the sender. I raised this point with several people and the general feeling was that revenge could not and should not be attempted. The greater number of people were surprised at my suggesting it.

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764 the Mun visits the *rumlyang* in future years he will see the soul grown to be an adult. There is no death in the *rumlyang*, but when I pointed out the contradiction of there being no death for the souls with the lamaist belief that the soul is reincarnated on earth, a compromise was reached by stating that the soul would die in the *rumlyang* if it were going to be reincarnated on this earth.

V

765 On the third day after the Sandé Kangyour or after the *sanglion* —according to which comes first—one Mani prayer-flag is erected; on the twenty-first day a second is erected; and on the forty-ninth as many as can be afforded up to the number of one hundred and eight. The cost of a single prayer-flag for the dead[7] is reckoned to be about a rupee; the person setting it up provides the cloth and any competent lama can stamp it with the die which is kept in the monastery. The flag is inscribed with the most usual name of the person in whose intention it is erected written in Tibetan script. One flag for each dead person is usually set up in the monastery precincts, either the one put up on the third or twenty-first day. This prayer-flag is sanctified by a lama, usually the Dorjé Lapoon, reading a sacred book over it and sprinkling it with holy water (*tyū*), while a boy stands by holding two *chimi* on a plate; it is set up with a shout and afterwards a procession of lamas, nuns and mourners walk round it and the monastery turning their prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* After the circumambulations are finished the whole procession prostrate themselves three times before the flag and touch the post first with their prayer-wheels, and then at a lower place with their foreheads.

The other prayer-flags set up outside the monastery precincts (they may be erected at the place where the corpse was disposed of or by his old home) are erected without any ceremony and may be put up by any layman. It is believed that the life of a prayer-flag will be proportionate to that of the person in whose intention it is erected; a flag for a young person will be soon tattered and torn, while that for an old person will last longer. It is permissible for anybody to dismantle a ragged prayer-flag, but it is rather unwise for a person unrelated to the setter-up to do so; for the setter-up might not consider it completely worn out, and in that case the

[7] Prayer flags for the living are slightly smaller and therefore less expensive; there are two dies for these but only one for the benefit of the dead.

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765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should
764 be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159
a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763
had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159
house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764
now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159
even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848]
was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
● [764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

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ANCIENT FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE LEPCHAS

R. NEBESKY DE WOJKOWITZ

177 The teachings and rites of the Unreformed School of Tibetan Buddhism—nowadays the dominant creed in the Sikkim State—have deeply influenced the beliefs and religious practices of the Lepchas, the main group of aboriginal inhabitants in the Sikkim area. In the course of four centuries, which passed since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism into Sikkim,[1] the original Lepcha traditions became so closely intermingled with ideas and customs of Tibetan origin,[2] that it is now a most difficult task to separate these two groups from each other ; this state is still more complicated by the fact that the Lepchas accepted—even if only in a smaller degree—also some of the traditions and customs of the neighbouring Mangars, Limbus,[3] Nepalese and Bhutanese. Among many other customs also ideas concerning the human soul, death and its causes, life after death, etc., as well as the funeral ceremonies themselves were greatly changed under Tibetan influence. Thus the belief in a judgement of the soul by the Lord of the Dead, *Cho ge pä no*[4] (Tb. *Chhos kyi rgyal po*), the migration of the soul through the perils of the *Bar do*[5] (Tb. *Bar do*)—the stage between death and new life—and its rebirth in one of the "six worlds", the punishment of sinners in hell or *Nyó lyang* (Tb. *dMyal ba*), and other well known theories of Tibetan Buddhism are therefore today [764] widely spread among the Lepchas. Oral tradition, however, preserved accounts of the early Lepcha customs and in some of the remote, scarcely accessible valleys of Sikkim the old funeral rites are said to be still observed.

774 According to the old Lepcha belief,[6] the soul[7] is given to a human being by *Fă gróng thíng* and his wife *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the 775 Lepcha race,[8] at the moment of birth. *Nă zóng nyo*, who is also responsible for the conception, determines of which sex the child is going to be. The place from which the soul comes and to which it again returns after a man's death, is called *Rŭm lyang*, "the place of gods". It is believed, that this place lies somewhere in the hills, close to Mount Kanchenjunga.[9] The soul, once it has returned to the *Rŭm lyang*, will stay there with the spirits of the ancestors and not reincarnate in this world again. It also will not have to undergo any punishment for the sins, which the deceased might have committed during his lifetime.

At the time of birth, the soul is believed to be very small, but later on it becomes gradually bigger, keeping pace with the growth of the body. The soul of a living being is called *A pil* and it

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774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
● 764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

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prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away. 776 764

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death. 776 761 828

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol hung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one. 776 764 775

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life 776

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776 to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo să rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

775 At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a ●764 *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

[784] When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water ; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

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on the forehead to be presented by the spirit to *Fă gróng thing*, the male ancestor of the Lepchas. A half seer of riee was measured, wrapped in a piece of cloth and placed at the side of the dead, "to serve as food on the road"; while in common life always a heaped measure is taken, in this case the measure is linear. 764

The corpse was taken out of the house by an opening, which had been made either in a wall or in the floor, as the dead was not supposed to leave his former residence by the door. After the corpse had been brought into the open, it was placed on a bamboo stetcher or—according to Tibetan custom—its legs were bent, the knees drawn towards the chin and then fastened in this position with a band. In the latter case, the body was ultimately placed into an old basket and then carried on the back by anybody strong enough, to the cemetery. The top of the basket was usually covered with a piece of nice, embroidered cloth, which however was not burried along with the dead.

Today, in consequence of Tibetan influence, the dead are burnt on pyres and the ashes immerged in a river. The Sikkimese lamas, who introduced this custom, claim that by burning a dead one certainly avoids his soul becoming the victim of a malignant spirit and thus the old rites of freeing a soul from the power of a demon or the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, which were formerly performed by a *Mŭn*, became unnecessary. Nowadays, the majority of the Lepcha people burn their dead and only in a few very remote places some of the old funeral customs, like the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, are still practised. Mostly however, lamas are called today into the house to conduct the necessary ceremonies and to guide the soul on the way to the other world, as prescribed by the Buddhist religion; very frequently however also a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* are fetched to say simultaneously some prayers according to Lepcha tradition. 764 177

In former times, very elaborate funeral ceremonies were performed and it was customary, to bury the dead in graves. Some details of these ceremonies as well as the form of the grave varied with the different clans and localities. 764

It seems, that at least three different types of grave were developed by the various Lepcha clans:[14]

(a) The *cók*, a pit-grave with a circular base; the dead was placed in this grave either in a reclining or erect position, his face turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga.

(b) A pit-grave called *cók den*,—with a square base—into which the corpse was put in erect position and facing Kanchenjunga.

(c) An oblong grave, the *cók bli*, in which the dead was buried in a reclining position, turned in the same manner as before,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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•764 On top of each grave a small hillock was made, with a tombstone (*cók bum*) in the middle; the grave thus marked was called *cók de*. The inside of the pit was carefully laid out with stones, so that the earth would not touch the corpse. The reason, why the dead were always turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga was that they "should see the mountain, from which the Lepchas originated."

According to the custom of various localities, people were either buried in single graves, which were made in the fields, the jungle or—more frequently—close to a river, or on cemeteries, called *cók bróng lyang* or *cók bram lyang*. While the single graves were mostly destroyed in the course of time, the site of the ancient cemeteries is still [766] often remembered.—Children below the age of ten were buried without the full ceremonial. Women, who died together with their child in childbirth, were buried jointly in one tomb.

When the funeral procession reached the freshly dug grave, the corpse was lowered into the pit and then, according to local custom, various things were laid near the dead. Besides the half seer of rice and the coin for *Fă gróng thing*, a bow and arrow were placed at the side of a man, or sometimes his knife (*ban*), the indispensable instrument of every Lepcha man. To a girl, her comb, and to a woman her sickle were given. Then a rope made of bamboo tissue and consisting of two parts, linked together with a loose sling, was lowered by a *Bong thing, Mŭn*, or a close relative into the grave. Shortly before the pit was closed, the person who held the rope called the deceased by his name, telling him that his "life spirit" is now being removed and that he should keep away from the living and not try to harm them; then he pulled hard on the rope, so that the sling opened and the lower half of the rope fell into the pit.

In order to close the grave, at first some stones were arranged in a kind of roof also above the basket, so that the corpse was surrounded now from all sides by a stone wall. Then earth was pilled up, to form a small hillock and above the head of the dead, the tombstone was set. When heaping up this hillock, great care was taken to make its surface as smooth as possible, because three days after the funeral the relatives had to return to the grave, to see whether there were any traces on the [787] hillock. If imprints of human feet were seen, it was regarded as a sign that the spirit of the dead had walked around the grave, but if traces of any animal were found, it was believed that they were left by the demon, who had caused the man's illness and death.—Then a grass whisk was taken and a magic circle was drawn with it around the tomb, to prevent any other soul from entering it. In some localities, if a man was buried, a "wild boars nest"—a small shelter in form of a nest, as made

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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by wild boars during the rainy season—was erected with the help of some twigs and dry leaves, the idea probably being, that this nest should provide a temporary shelter for the *Mŭk nyam* who according to the belief of some Lepcha clans, stays for seven days on the burial ground. When a woman died, a small hand-loom was sometimes placed near the tomb. 764

After closing the grave, an egg was broken on the tombstone and some rice as well as a bamboo container filled with Lepcha beer (*ci*) were placed on the hillock as a food-offering for the dead. Then all tools which were used for digging the pit were beaten against each other for a while and at last all the wooden handles of these instruments were removed and piled up near the grave, while only the iron parts were kept to be used again.

When returning from the funeral, the mourners had to put up obstacles—as already mentioned before—to hinder the demon *Mă zóm mung* from following them. When reaching the house, everybody who had attended the funeral had to undergo a ritual purification. To this purpose an ox was killed and some of its blood was poured into a vessel and strained with water; the right foreleg of the sacrificed animal was laid aside, to be used in the ceremony which commenced after darkness had fallen, while the rest was prepared as food for the guests. Then a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* entered the house, in which the death had occurred and performed its cleansing, going into every room and sprinkling in all corners some of the ox blood, with the help of a whisk made of nine different kinds of grass. Then all foodstuff which had lain close to the dead, had to be removed and at last everybody before entering the house had to be purified by waving the grass whisk over his head; this action was known as *Phik* or *A phik*. 764 763

During the night the ceremony of "recalling the *Mŭk nyam*" had to be performed and in some of the more outlying localities this rite is sometimes still practised. Only a *Mŭn* can perform this rite. In former times, before starting her invocations, the *Mŭn* had to walk in the evening to the grave and beat several times with a stick against the tombstone. Returning to the house, she took her seat with the back to a wall and facing the door; it was regarded as auspicious, if she could face in this position Mt. Kanchenjunga. 764

Then the right foreleg of the ox, which had been prepared previously, was placed in a basket and brought into the room. Only the upper part of the leg was used, while the part from the knee downward was cut away. The basket was set near the *Mŭn* and a rope wound around the joint of the leg, while the other end was fastened with a

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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764 loose sling to the little finger of the *Mŭn's* left hand. In her right hand she took a knife, as weapon against evil spirits.

764 After these preparations had been finished, the *Mŭn* works herself gradually into a slight trance, and with a high, loud voice she begins 775 her incantations. She calls upon the *Mŭk nyam* to recognize, that he belongs from now on to the world of the dead, and that he should not hide in trees, stones, rivers, lakes or fire, but he should join the soul of the *Mŭn* for a tour of the Lepcha land. The *Mŭn* sings now for hours a long, rhymed account, the text of which she had learned by heart from her teacher during the time of initiation. She describes to the spirit the beauty of Sikkim, its snow mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes, the forests, fields and lonely dwellings of men. At last, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit down the Teesta River and describing the source of this greatest river of Sikkim, she conducts the *Mŭk nyam* across the Indian plains, "to show it the ocean". But she admonishes the deceased, that he should not gaze too long at the endless sea, as he has to return with her that very night to the Lepcha land. Then again the *Mŭk nyam* is led to the Teesta and following the river upstream, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit back to the house, from which they started the journey.[18]

764 In the early morning, when the darkness of the night begins to fade into the grey of the approaching day, the ceremony reaches its 775 climax. At this time all the relatives of the deceased, who are present 787 in the house, assemble in front of the *Mŭn*. The dresses, jewellery and other personal belongings of the dead person, as well as numerous dishes with various foods are placed near the *Mŭn*, who finishes now her incantations and falls into a full trance. Her eyes close, the face becomes ash-gray and mask-like. Suddenly, tears begin to flow from her eyes and the whole body begins to tremble. This is supposed to be the moment at which the spirit of the deceased enters the body of the *Mŭn*, and using the sorceress as a medium, the *Mŭk nyam* begins to speak through her mouth. He tells now to his relatives the cause of his death and expresses his last wishes, while members of the family in their turn frequently ask the deceased, whether he left perhaps any business unsettled in his lifetime, where some of his possessions, which could not be found are hidden, etc. Many of the older Lepchas who witnessed several times the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, unanimously state that frequently most surprising occurrences take place during this ceremony. It often happens that somebody dies without having disclosed, where he had hidden his money or jewels, and the relatives were searching in vain for these things. If however this question is put to the *Mŭn* in his trance, she usually answers it without hesitation

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which
823 is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral
766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and
[756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[16] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭh nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-putso-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namteeemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil.[1] While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 184

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Na zong nyo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad khum beags*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad khum beags* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tasa Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *beTsun berung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773

1 [i.e., during the funeral rites. —Analyst]

114 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the
323 assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other
[437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas.
[415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave
●764 goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sön-lyang, originally called Söm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [184] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

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Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was 764
kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse 789
was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, 782
four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'. L

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in 771
many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as 764
Pōn. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim 782
says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pōn-pōn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pōn* for three days and nights.' L

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after 775
death through subterranean passages to the local deities of 823
Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages. L

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in 771
Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Nga*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

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and as in Mongolia since Sö-nam Gya-tso conducted his campaign of conversion and reform, so in Sikkim also Buddhism is steadily pushing out the older faith. One of my Lepcha servants died, leaving no children, brothers or sisters, but a widow only. The other Lepchas in my employ at once subscribed one rupee each for a lama to perform the funeral ceremonies.

In Tibet there is a funeral hymn, ascribed, as are so many other writings, to King Song-tsen Gam-po. It portrays the sorrows of old age, the pains of death, the four kinds of funeral, the terrors of the Judgement, and ends on a note of repentance. It is too long to quote in full, but I should like to give the three concluding verses. My translation is no doubt a bald one, but it expresses the Tibetan original with fair accuracy.

Gone is all the wealth he gathered, snapped
up by whoever can;
But the sins he gathered in the taking of
that wealth remain.
So by dreadful myrmidons he 's led before the
Lord of Death.
Come thou down, most precious Lama, come and
thy protection give!
From life's endless round
deliver, highest, mightiest Chen-re-si!

Falling down th' abyss into the three great
Regions of the Damned,
Feeling nothing fixed, but driven like a
feather by the wind,
Powerless along the cliffside path that
down the *Bar-do* runs.
Come thou down, most precious Lama, &c.

Youth with rising powers has passed
regardless of the Holy Faith;
Now in life's declining years I put
aside all slothfulness.
Grant that I may thus go forward steadfast
while this life shall last.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own.

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive.

[p. 344 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 the Mun visits the *rumlyang* in future years he will see the soul grown to be an adult. There is no death in the *rumlyang*, but when I pointed out the contradiction of there being no death for the souls with the lamaist belief that the soul is reincarnated on earth, a compromise was reached by stating that the soul would die in the *rumlyang* if it were going to be reincarnated on this earth.

V

765 On the third day after the Sandé Kangyour or after the *sanglion* —according to which comes first—one Mani prayer-flag is erected; on the twenty-first day a second is erected; and on the forty-ninth as many as can be afforded up to the number of one hundred and eight. The cost of a single prayer-flag for the dead[7] is reckoned to be about a rupee; the person setting it up provides the cloth and any competent lama can stamp it with the die which is kept in the monastery. The flag is inscribed with the most usual name of the person in whose intention it is erected written in Tibetan script. One flag for each dead person is usually set up in the monastery precincts, either the one put up on the third or twenty-first day. This prayer-flag is sanctified by a lama, usually the Dorjé Lapoon, reading a sacred book over it and sprinkling it with holy water (*tyü*), while a boy stands by holding two *chimi* on a plate; it is set up with a shout and afterwards a procession of lamas, nuns and mourners walk round it and the monastery turning their prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* After the circumambulations are finished the whole procession prostrate themselves three times before the flag and touch the post first with their prayer-wheels, and then at a lower place with their foreheads.

The other prayer-flags set up outside the monastery precincts (they may be erected at the place where the corpse was disposed of or by his old home) are erected without any ceremony and may be put up by any layman. It is believed that the life of a prayer-flag will be proportionate to that of the person in whose intention it is erected; a flag for a young person will be soon tattered and torn, while that for an old person will last longer. It is permissible for anybody to dismantle a ragged prayer-flag, but it is rather unwise for a person unrelated to the setter-up to do so; for the setter-up might not consider it completely worn out, and in that case the

[7] Prayer flags for the living are slightly smaller and therefore less expensive; there are two dies for these but only one for the benefit of the dead.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15. 765 [688]

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the 765 152

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
764 formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [713]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without 858 any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held [855] in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the
[166] body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth
[783] feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 as with us, almost a different species with their special 'childish' rules of conduct and ways of thought. It follows that—save perhaps individually in the immediate post-infancy period—childishness is not considered an excuse either for anti-social behaviour or for stupidity; a child is capable of committing crimes as much as an adult is, and may be punished as severely, though in different ways; and, judged by adult standards, their conversation is stupid and largely meaningless.

But although in one way adults regard children as potentially small adults, they have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them. Children are not quite human. If they survive they will turn into proper members of society; but if they die they will turn into particularly malevolent devils—num-een *moong*. There is no assurance of survival, either realistically or supernaturally; the horoscopes always hedge on this point: 'Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year . . . he will [766] live to be seventy-one.' A child who dies before about his tenth year is treated very differently to an adult; no funeral ceremonies are held for it and the body is thrown unceremoniously into the river; but elaborate apotropaic ceremonies are performed[6] to ward away its ghost-devil; and even should a child die at a distance these apotropaic ceremonies are performed, whereas for dead adults who die abroad no sort of funeral service is performed. The more attached a child was to his home and family, the more vigorously will his num-een *moong* attempt to reduce the other members to the same state as itself. Consequently a child represents potential supernatural danger. A dead infant turns into ing-bong *moong*, which is far less dangerous and much easier to get rid of.

The attitude of parents towards a child between the ages of about four and ten are therefore twofold: the child is a potential adult, but one in need of training and education to make him a socially valuable adult; at the same time the child is a potential source of supernatural danger, and as such it would be uneconomical to lavish too much affection on it. Should the child live it will be a great source of comfort and help; should it die it would be a source of great danger; the two contingencies must be taken into account. Finally, in the present a young child is often a nuisance and always an expense.

Some time between the child's third and fifth year—usually about the age of four—a child's achievement of physical indepen-

[6] See Chapter Thirteen, p. 352–353, also Chapter Eight, p. 233.

I: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATH

i

761 Death is the real enemy of Lepcha life. Disease and hail and failure of crops occupy the Lepchas more emotionally, for these are possibly preventable accidents and against them precautions can be taken. But death is absolute and final and cannot be fought against; some precautions can be taken against a death which has struck one member finding other victims in the community, but against death itself there is nothing to do. Death is too terrible to envisage clearly or discuss often; death, and, to a lesser extent, the dead who have suffered death are hated and feared and not talked about.

764 Once a person is dead there are two things to do; the danger of the devil that has caused his death finding another victim in the community must be averted and the dead man must be got rid of as thoroughly and completely as possible. People who have left this world never return to it benevolently; if they do have any contact with the living it is as malevolent supernaturals, as devils. The older a person grows the less likely is he to hanker after the world he has left and therefore the less he is to be feared; children and young people suddenly torn from their life will surely turn into malevolent devils.

766 The infection and danger of death is strictly local and therefore if a person dies away from home no sort of ceremony is held for him; the body is just unceremoniously thrown into the river. Why should strangers be at the expense of a funeral? No relics will be returned. When the survivors hear of the distant death of a relative they will simply set up prayer flags. They will not hold a *sanglion* (death ceremony), for if the soul has turned into a *moong* it will haunt the place where it died and will not trouble *them*. That the soul of the dear departed will not be able to find its way to the *rumlyang* (paradise) does not matter. The ceremonies

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

766 to be described later are more for a protection for the living than as a help for the dead. Only if a young child were to die away from its home would the ceremony of Dek Flee[1] be held to keep away its haunting demon.

775 764 It is at death and the ceremonies which surround death that the beliefs and ritual of the Mun and lamas most obviously clash and contradict one another. Both creeds hold that the soul outside the body is lost in some dangerous region through which it must be conducted; and therefore representatives of both creeds help to conduct the soul away. But the soul's destination on these wanderings is completely different; for the lama the soul wanders for forty-nine days in a sort of purgatory, after which it is judged and rewarded and sent on to its next incarnation, whether it be on the earth as another human being or as an animal or to heaven for a period of blessedness or to hell for a period of torment. For the Mun the soul is conducted to the *rumlyang*, where it is born again as a tiny child, very often of a different sex to its former life; in the *rumlyang* the child grows up to maturity and leads a happy and immortal life among all the other dead, a life similar to that here on earth except that there is no death or disease or want.

The implicit contradictions in these beliefs are realised in the case of lamas and nuns, for whom the Mun perform no ceremonies; the souls of lamas and nuns are not led to the *rumlyang* but conducted through the *bardo* or purgatory. But for laymen ceremonies of both religions are held simultaneously; the lamas perform inside the house while the Mun does his ceremonies outside.

764 766 There are three alternative methods of disposing of a corpse; it may be burnt, buried, or thrown into the river. Which method is adopted depends partly on the condition of the deceased and partly on the lama's horoscopes. The lamas and nuns are never buried; they are almost always burnt unless they die in the wet season, in which case their bodies are thrown into the river. Laymen are never burnt; whether they are buried or thrown into the river depends on the lama's horoscope; the greater number are buried. Young children should always be thrown into the river, but occasionally an exception is made; thus Patek's mother when she lost in rapid succession four children in infancy burnt the body of the last one in anger and as a protest at the way the supernaturals were treating her; but such behaviour is extremely uncommon.

764 As soon as a person dies the position in which he has expired

[1] Vide sub, p. 352–353.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 While the corpse is in the house the people of that household must not eat salt or butter.

The corpse of a layman is also doubled up in the same way, but the hands are crossed on the breast and the head is allowed to flop. The body is put in a big openwork basket. Usually for a layman there is only one day's wait between death and burial, but occasionally people will wait three days. A layman also is instructed and advised by lamas, but at the same time the Mun who will perform the *sanglion* and any other benevolent people who know how to are helping the corpse on the road to the *rumlyang* by meditation—*munthen.*

ii

764 Before the body of a lama or nun is carried out of the house a pyre must be prepared; this consists of a square pile about 766 seven feet high, with eight layers of wood if the deceased is a man and nine if a woman. The pyre must be made of the wood of one of two designated trees and must not be composed of more than three trees; the first tree of all must be cut down by the nearest available male relation of the deceased. The place where the pyre is made and its direction in relation to the house of the dead man will have been indicated by the lamas' horoscope; there are about half a dozen burning and burial places around Lingthem in more or less every direction; they are all removed some way away from any habitation and are placed on uncultivable spurs of land. The hour at which the corpse should be removed and also the year of birth of the people carrying the corpse are designated by the horoscope.

The journey from the house to the pyre must be made without a break. The body is put on the pyre seated to face west—that is towards Kinchenjunga. If the dead person is a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy, just before the corpse is placed on the pyre or in the grave the body is ripped open so that the navel-cord is torn and the foetus is placed on the mother's lap. This can be done by anybody who has sufficient courage. Then all the male relations of the deceased stand at all four sides of the pyre and set fire to it simultaneously. If the corpse has left a widow or widower a portion of that person's hair is cut off and burnt at the same time as the body. It is essential that every piece of wood and bone should be burnt to ashes; if necessary the corpse will be broken up to this end. About 8 lbs. of butter, a big basket of rice and all sorts of other

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

grain are burnt with the corpse; a sort of long-handled shovel is used to make these offerings and they are thrown on to the pyre a little at a time, the officiating lama counting out loud and finishing up with a shout. The lama counts up to five ten times, up to seven five times and up to eight ten times. A pig, or very occasionally an ox, is killed at the house and this is put on to the pyre as food for the corpse after the corpse has been consumed. This animal is not usually consumed completely but merely cooked; the people who gathered the wood for the pyre are given this meat as their fee; if there is no meat they are given money. The relations of the dead man must stay by the pyre until the ashes are quite extinct. 764 766

All the unrelated people who have accompanied the family to the burning place are given a meal of rice, and a small gift of money —usually one or two annas—is given to a representative of each household present. Similar presents are also given to those who attend a burial if the mourners can afford it. On the way back from the disposal of a corpse a small bonfire is built for the mourners to jump over, and a knife or some other piece of iron is put in the doorway of the house for people to step over; both these precautions are taken to disinfect the mourners from the possible magical contagion of death. [783]

Except that the corpse is not dressed and anointed in the house, but only when it is brought to the place designated for burial, the preliminaries for burial are exactly the same as those for burning. The corpse is carried in the basket to the burial place by one man, a near relation if possible; a husband must always carry his wife and a son his mother. As well as the friends and relations of the deceased a Mun accompanies the buriers. When the party arrive at the chosen site the corpse is placed on the ground and is washed and anointed with the mixture of butter, cloves, nutmeg and camphor, and wrapped in a new cloth which is arranged so as to cover the face. Then a circular grave about the height of a man is dug; a big stone is put at the bottom and the sides are lined with stones and four ropes are placed against the four corners. While these preparations are being made the surviving spouse or eldest son will stay by the corpse and talk to it saying: 'We are preparing this new house for you.' The body is put into the grave still sitting in the basket, orientated to face Kinchenjunga; then on the top of the grave and corpse is put a big flat stone and on the top of that four cooking stones supporting another flat stone. On the top of this is placed a little white stone which serves as an indication that the place is a 764

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 palaces'.[3] In front of all these is placed a special plate of pottery made with nine handles; this is left empty. The ceremonial is the same as for Sandé *moong*.

If the deceased has met his death by violence, that is through Arot *moong*, the ceremony of Tikar Sangyour has to be performed. After a death by violence has occurred in a family the descendants should keep up the ceremony yearly for ever, for violent death is infectious and hereditary; it can also be performed apotropaically. The path by which a corpse, who has died violently, has been carried should be avoided; and at the *sanglion* of such people no raw meat is given, but only cooked meat, as raw meat will carry the infection. Tafoor performs this ceremony because his grandfather fell from a height and was drowned; so do Ongden, Nariya, the Mandal (although in his case this is precautionary) and many others.

764 On a block of wood one large and four small images of a horse with a rider are made of millet powder coloured red. In front of 778 this is a black image of the female supernatural Mamoo *moong*, and in front of her an inflated animal's bladder. In front of this again is a *chimi* and at the four corners are four pots containing respectively scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison, and water from five rivers. There are also small offerings of grain and various decorations. While the special sacred book is being read *cherkem* is offered. When the offering is carried out a torch is laid down on top of it facing in the same direction; on top of this are placed leaves of wormwood and a stone on top of that.

766 In the case of a child dying before the age of about ten none of the ceremonies described above are performed nor is a *sanglion* made for it. Instead of these the ceremony of Dek Flee is performed by a Mun three days after death. For this ceremony a goat is required and also a tray covered with a black cloth on which is put samples of every sort of grain and a bundle of seven pieces of wood tied up with reed; besides that a bundle of elephant grass and other prickly plants are needed. The ceremony is performed inside the house.

The goat is tethered to a pole and a second rope made out of reed with three knots in it is tied round the goat's neck. This the Mun and all the members of the household in turn touch, and then the Mun throws the rope forward out of the house door three times. If by any chance the knot should point inwards there will be another

[3] Thirteen, being an odd number, is lucky.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some 766 ●
firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *péks* the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*tiklyong-kup*) is set up [831]
between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time.

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* 764
all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*.

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the 764
dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn 778
a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 531 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
874 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery
792 has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's
622 leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about
775 the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun,
● [764] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

251 415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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764 On top of each grave a small hillock was made, with a tombstone (*cók bum*) in the middle; the grave thus marked was called *cók de*. The inside of the pit was carefully laid out with stones, so that the earth would not touch the corpse. The reason, why the dead were always turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga was that they "should see the mountain, from which the Lepchas originated."

According to the custom of various localities, people were either buried in single graves, which were made in the fields, the jungle or—more frequently—close to a river, or on cemeteries, called *cók bróng lyang* or *cók bram lyang*. While the single graves were mostly destroyed in the course of time, the site of the ancient cemeteries is still [766] often remembered.—Children below the age of ten were buried without the full ceremonial. Women, who died together with their child in childbirth, were buried jointly in one tomb.

When the funeral procession reached the freshly dug grave, the corpse was lowered into the pit and then, according to local custom, various things were laid near the dead. Besides the half seer of rice and the coin for *Fă gróng thing*, a bow and arrow were placed at the side of a man, or sometimes his knife (*ban*), the indispensable instrument of every Lepcha man. To a girl, her comb, and to a woman her sickle were given. Then a rope made of bamboo tissue and consisting of two parts, linked together with a loose sling, was lowered by a *Bong thing*, *Măn*, or a close relative into the grave, Shortly before the pit was closed, the person who held the rope called the deceased by his name, telling him that his "life spirit" is now being removed and that he should keep away from the living and not try to harm them; then he pulled hard on the rope, so that the sling opened and the lower half of the rope fell into the pit.

In order to close the grave, at first some stones were arranged in a kind of roof also above the basket, so that the corpse was surrounded now from all sides by a stone wall. Then earth was pilled up, to form a small hillock and above the head of the dead, the tombstone was set. When heaping up this hillock, great care was taken to make its surface as smooth as possible, because three days after the funeral the relatives had to return to the grave, to see whether there were any traces on the [787] hillock. If imprints of human feet were seen, it was regarded as a sign that the spirit of the dead had walked around the grave, but if traces of any animal were found, it was believed that they were left by the demon, who had caused the man's illness and death.—Then a grass whisk was taken and a magic circle was drawn with it around the tomb, to prevent any other soul from entering it. In some localities, if a man was buried, a "wild boars nest" —a small shelter in form of a nest, as made

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which
823 is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral
●766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and
[756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[18] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭh nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön"
(r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
the priests during which they used magic.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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764
and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated ; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FOOD

i

261 For the Lepchas, as for almost all primitive peoples, by far the most important subject in their lives is food. Far and away the greatest part of their lives is centred round food-getting; it is impossible to over-stress its importance. But because food-getting is so constant a preoccupation, and because it is fairly featureless and uneventful, it nearly always, it seems to me, receives far less attention than it deserves. The features chiefly dealt with by ethnologists, including of course the greater part of this book, are those which take place during the primitive's leisure. Some peoples, I am aware, centre their social and religious life about food; 771 but this is not the case with the Lepchas. Food-products play a considerable rôle in the objects of sacrifice, but with the lamas this aspect is not stressed; most ceremonial objects are made out of grain-flour and butter, but this is because they are the most convenient and easily accessible materials; by the time they have been fashioned the edible qualities of these objects are not apparent. A minor sacrifice is made when a new field is taken into cultivation for the first time, and prayers are said, usually by a layman, after each sowing; and the Mun make elaborate ceremonies, to be described later, yearly at the flowering of the cardamum, and at the sowing and gathering of dry rice. In the annual cycle of lamaist ceremonies there are a certain number which are devoted to the protection of crops from hail and predatory beasts, and, before the sowing starts, some seed is collected from each household and given a communal blessing at a monastery service; but these rites take an insignificant place in the yearly sum of religious ceremonies. Lepcha religion is above all occupied with health.

261 Food does however play a very important rôle in the Lepchas' 152 emotional lives. Love, whether between spouses, friends, or parents and children, is considered to be the result of mutual

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

[*Lamaism, or, as it is sometimes called, Mahayana Buddhism, is a subject of the greatest complexity, to the study of which scholars of world-wide repute have devoted their whole lives. Its organisation is as elaborate as that of the medieval Catholic church, its hagiology, demonology and ritual are infinitely more complicated, and it is split into nearly as many sub-sects as contemporary Christianity. My ignorance of Tibetan prevents me discussing it in any great detail. Among the Lepchas of Zongu the practices of lamaism present more variety of detail than any other single facet of their lives; my notes on lamaist ritual far exceed those on any other subject. I had at one moment considered comparing the lamaism as I saw it practised in Lingthem with the accounts given by other people of more orthodox practices in unmixed lamaist communities, but even confining myself to those rites at which I was present, I soon discovered that the bulk of the material involved would be out of all proportion to its place in the social and religious life of the Lepchas. I have therefore limited myself to a generalised account of the impact of lamaism on the life of the Lepchas of Zongu; in practically no instances have I given the details of ritual or of the fabrication of ritual objects, not because I do not know them, but because they would overweight what is from my point of view a subsidiary subject. To a lesser degree these remarks also apply to the rituals of the Mun and to the extremely elaborate mythology and folklore derived from both religions. Possibly in the future (I hope with the collaboration of Mr. C. J. Morris) I may publish the full details of the ritual and belief of both religions in a different work.*] 771 128

i

The discussion of the Lepchas' religion is rendered extremely complicated by the fact that they practise simultaneously, and without any feeling of theoretical discomfort, two (or possibly three) mutually contradictory religions: of these the older Lepcha 771 756

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

771 religion is nameless but, on the analogy of lamaism, I propose calling it the Mun religion (after the title of the priests); the worship of
756 the people of Mayel, which was possibly originally separate, forms nowadays a part of the Mun religion; and this religion is in all its major beliefs opposed to lamaism. For the Mun priesthood goes by the possession of a manifestation of a supernatural spirit which is attached to a family line, so that there can never be more than one simultaneously in each group (there may be two in one biological family, one spirit descending from the father's group, and one from the mother's). The chief function of the Mun is to ward off the misfortunes and illnesses caused by devils, which is done, partly by sacrifices, especially animal sacrifices, and partly by direct communing with the supernaturals. On certain occasions the Mun become possessed by their guardian spirit and prophesy; at death ceremonies they summon the soul of the dead man to speak his last wishes through their mouth, and then conduct it into the *rum lyang*—the place of the Gods—where it is reborn as an infant, and grows up to an eternal life similar to the life here on earth.

771 In lamaism on the contrary priesthood and sanctity are acquired by learning and not by inspiration; the sacrifice of animals is a
779 heinous sin; the future can be learned by calculations from the holy books and not by inspiration; the soul of the dead wanders for a short time in a sort of purgatory, before being reincarnated either in another form on this earth, or going to some heaven or hell, as different as imagination can make them from anything experienced on earth. Most important of all, lamaist ethics are founded on a belief in individual destiny and a sense of sin; lamaism contains a long, explicit and detailed list of sins which can be performed by human beings, and which are visited on the evil-doer, first by feelings of remorse and secondly by punishment either in this life or in future reincarnations. Lepchas have a word for sin, because they have borrowed the Tibetan word, but they have, I think, no idea of sin; and the only act to which the word is commonly applied is to the killing of animals; by a few who have accepted lamaism it is also applied to envy or slander, expressed in thought, word or deed. With these exceptions they do not use the word 'sin,' *la-yo*, in connection with individual behaviour; the supernatural sanctions which punish disapproved-of actions are expressed as *nam-toak*, a year of disaster which affects the whole community. Even for acts less violently disapproved of, which

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incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lamaist supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

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essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand, collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and they are expected to support, at any rate in part, the Dorjé Lapoon and the monastery custodian; they also have to give fixed contributions to the feasts which validate the rise in grade of the higher ecclesiastics.

The Lepchas have been converts to lamaism at least one, and probably two centuries, but they have, if I may so express it, sterilised and ignored those aspects of the alien religion which were sharply opposed to their major existing attitudes. They have as it were, swallowed lamaism whole, but excreted the irritating portions. The mythology presented no difficulties; their pantheon was always large and expanding, through the divination of new supernaturals, and further numbers of similar supernaturals were easily accepted; it was understandable that foreigners should know of large numbers of new ones, almost as worthy of worship as the older established ones. The idea of a priesthood in which the priests need training by older priests was also one they already possessed; and that priests should be designated by divination (the horoscope) or by heredity, rather than by the possession of a hereditary spirit was an easy modification of existing attitudes. So too was the idea that the future could be learned by calculation, as well as by dreams and inspiration; the Lepchas have a complete belief in horoscopes and have incorporated them into their lives. Similarly the idea that an essential part of the efficacy of ritual lies in word-for-word repetition was one they already possessed; that, instead of learning by rote, these rituals could be found through the alien art of reading, was to their mind a distinct advantage for lamaism, and the books and those that read them are respected and revered. Similarly mystic contemplation, to expel devils or acquire supernatural powers, had its parallel in the *munthen*, the mystic communion, of the Mun.

The social organisation was a more alien concept; to a certain, though not completely formulated, extent, they have equated the organisation of lamas with that of the family; for a lama to sleep with the wife of an inferior lama is likened to the incest of an elder brother sleeping with his younger brother's wife, though there are no sanctions against such acts; the Dorjé Lapoon are equated with the grandfathers who withdraw from work at the end of their lives to be supported by their sons and grandsons. Nevertheless this parallel does not hold good altogether, and, in so far as they have accepted the social organisation of lamaism the Lepchas have incorporated a new and alien element into their lives. This

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●771 new element is however not of major importance; although
177 religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death
[166] are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

157 As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted
177 the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic.
771 Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked
[152] acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some
771 laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do
177 not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Muh to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child [855] is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 . AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGION II: THE MUN

i

As opposed to lamaism the Mun religion carries with it no social organisation; the Mun and their parallel priests are simply individuals who, through their possession by a spirit, have certain gifts and duties; unlike the lamas and the civil officers their position carries with it no sort of title in ordinary life. Besides the Mun three other types of priesthood by possession are recognised; these are the Padem, the Yaba, and the Pau. The Mun spirit is a female spirit, the other three are male. They are attached to family lines and are roughly hereditary; they often descend from grandfather to grandson or from grandmother to granddaughter; but there is no regularity about this and a man may inherit a possessing spirit from a woman, and *vice versa*; once the vehicle dies the spirit may not choose another body immediately and large groups may be without the possessing spirit for a number of years. The manifestation of the spirit (for the spirits themselves live immortal beyond Kinchenjunga) may choose anybody for its vehicle, with one exception; none of the spirits will enter a lama or his own children, though they may enter his family.

Both men and women can be Mun, but only men can be Padem (or Bum-*thing* as they are called outside Zongu); these are both pure Lepcha spirits and are essentially similar, save that the Padem are far less powerful, and that instruction by an already qualified Padem is optional, whereas for Mun a three year course of instruction is obligatory. Padem are weaker than Mun and capable of exorcising far fewer devils; they cannot prophesy nor perform the death ceremony. For many men Padem is the first step to becoming Mun; in Lingthem there are altogether eight Mun[1] of which four

[1] They are (men) Katel, Gongyop, Thyak Thimbu (Gongyop's elder brother) and Agyung (the adopted son of Serving): of these Gongyop practises regularly, Katel occasionally, the other two hardly at all. (women)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

They
437 have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

157 "A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bare-headed and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

000 "What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particu-
• 771 larly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
passion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[538] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tuk bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

000 9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

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Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa we* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa we* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

791 177

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya ba* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

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5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5
Tibet AJ1

Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ôngge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18]

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bôn, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now.

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace".

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [793]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [794]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
●771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named: amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Jensen has reported, it is likewise evident, that they occurred as a repetition of that first killing, from which new life was engendered. 796 782 771

Thus it is clear then, that the slaughtering of cattle which Zarathustra again and again condemned, was the imitating and repeating of the indeed cruel, but—blessed killing of the original bull.

And in the closest connection with this, Zarathustra condemned in the same place the Haoma sacrifice, although, it is true he does not mention the name Haoma, but uses instead, an old unmistakable title of the Haoma.

This simultaneous mentioning of the Haoma endorses my opinion that with the words, 'the bull must be killed,' the sacrifice of the bull in the Mitra cult and its cosmic meaning are alluded to." This bull is said to be identical with Haoma.[77]

Very correctly does Lommel lay emphasis on the drawing of ethnological and prehistorical parallels for the explanation of the ritual. Our case is specially instructive for such an interpretation. The beliefs of the Rong and their rites prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the cult of the intoxicating drink and the cult of the bull are not identical, but are two altogether independent cults, and moreover that they are not the imitation of the original offering of the deity itself. Among the oldest ethnological tribes this mystification is not to be found ; but it is certainly so among the younger peoples especially among those with the peculiar mystery-religion. Others believe that the intoxicating Haoma has been supplanted by the milk-haoma which links with an old milk-mystery. The Mithra religion is Apolonic, sober, formalistic ; the Iranian Gatha-religion on the contrary, is Dionysiac, and is familiar with the Haoma delirium, with ecstacies, trances, and the wandering of souls in a state of trance.

Among the Indo-Iranians the Soma-Haoma sacrifice was performed in spring time for all the gods.[78] We have pointed out that exactly the same thing happens in the case of the Rong. The Bong-thing and the Mun, by partaking of

77. H. Lommel, Mithra und das Stieropfer, in Paideuma, Bd. III, H. 6/7, Juni 1949, p. 216 sq., p. 212.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 449 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immense forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

 T

Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was 764
kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse 789
was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, 782
four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'. L

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in 771
many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as 764
Pōn. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim 782
says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pōn-pōn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pōn* for three days and nights.' L

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after 775
death through subterranean passages to the local deities of 823
Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages. L

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in 771
Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Nga*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

L and as in Mongolia since Sö-nam Gya-tso conducted his
● 771 campaign of conversion and reform, so in Sikkim also Buddhism is steadily pushing out the older faith. One of
L my Lepcha servants died, leaving no children, brothers or
764 sisters, but a widow only. The other Lepchas in my employ at once subscribed one rupee each for a lama to
T perform the funeral ceremonies.

533 In Tibet there is a funeral hymn, ascribed, as are so
764 many other writings, to King Song-tsen Gam-po. It portrays the sorrows of old age, the pains of death, the four kinds of funeral, the terrors of the Judgement, and ends on a note of repentance. It is too long to quote in full, but I should like to give the three concluding verses. My translation is no doubt a bald one, but it expresses the Tibetan original with fair accuracy.

Gone is all the wealth he gathered, snapped
up by whoever can;
But the sins he gathered in the taking of
that wealth remain.
So by dreadful myrmidons he 's led before the
Lord of Death.
Come thou down, most precious Lama, come and
thy protection give!
From life's endless round
deliver, highest, mightiest Chen-re-si!

Falling down th' abyss into the three grea
Regions of the Damned,
Feeling nothing fixed, but driven like a
feather by the wind,
Powerless along the cliffside path that
down the *Bar-do* runs.
Come thou down, most precious Lama, &c.

Youth with rising powers has passed
regardless of the Holy Faith;
Now in life's declining years I put
aside all slothfulness.
Grant that I may thus go forward steadfast
while this life shall last.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hazards of inheritance account sufficiently for the meaningless grouping of neighbours.

The names of the villages on either side of the river Talung are accounted for by the following oft-repeated etymological myth:

'On any clear day there is visible from Lingthem a large gendarme of black rock rising from the mountain Siniolchi, or, as it is called in Lepcha, Sanyol-koong. On that gendarme there lived once upon a time a devil called Lassoo-fo *moong* (the Lassoo bird devil). This devil was a man-eater; he used to capture people all through the neighbourhood and take them away to Tibet where he would kill and eat them. Therefore the Gods Kansi *thing* (lord), Kom-yo *thing* and Saktsum *thing* consulted together as to how they could kill this demon. They tried to find a man who was capable, but they could not do so. They then went to the caterpillar *pi-sik-bu* who gnaws trees so that they become hollow and fall down, and they told him to go and cut down the tree in that place.[3] The caterpillar agreed and hollowed the tree so that it fell down, after which the demon had no place to live and went wandering about. Then the three gods sent for Rum-nam (a mythological hero) to kill the demon, and wherever the demon went Rum-nam followed.

'The demon went down the Talung valley and came to Sakyong (so called because Tag-kyong-ka was killed there), Pantoong, Thong-to, Lavén, Tangvoong, Lungdeum (where he killed children), A-dong, Ling-them (*tem-la tem-la taa*: he ate each in turn): the village opposite is called Liklyang, the place of crying, because people cried out from there.[4] Rum-nam chased him and eventually overtook him at Lasso-tsong-nyong, in the Teesta valley to the west, and there killed him and scattered his flesh over the land. From this scattered flesh arose leeches and mosquitoes, and the small predatory bird *kar-hu-fo*. His bones turned into stone, and at the place where he was slain there is a huge stone which can be seen to this day.'

Except for questions of the size of the population and the fertility of the land and some minor details of internal administration,

[3] There is a verbal confusion here between the various meanings of the word *koong*—(1) mountain peak, and (2) tree, worked wood, and finally house-pillar. There are obviously no trees on the gendarme which is well above the snow level. However I heard this story repeated several times in identical terms.

[4] All the other village names have etymological derivations from the same legend, but it seems unnecessary to give them all.

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621 there is not considered to be any sort of difference in customs or character between the various villages of Zongu, with a single exception. This exception is the village of Pantoong, on the far 184 side of the Talung valley and the nearest settlement of all to the 262 foot of Kinchenjunga; this village was until a generation ago the home of a group of serpent-eaters. These serpent-eaters all belonged to one *ptso* or patrilineal group, the Salong *ptso*. This *ptso*, though dying out, is not yet extinct, but its living representatives no longer eat snakes. Old Lepchas of Zongu have however seen these people eat the snakes; they would stone the reptile, cut off its head, and devour the body. The origin of this habit is the following story:

773 'One day the ancestor of the *ptso* was going through the forest 539 when he came on what he thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong *rum*, the king of all animals and the patron God of hunters, who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnation's body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it; whereupon Pong *rum* appeared to him and said "You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity." This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them.'

262 When I was studying the language in Kalimpong, my teacher, a missionised Lepcha, told me that the story of eating snakes was a cruel libel spread about the Lepchas by the Nepali; there was not, he insisted, an atom of truth in it, and he obviously felt that it was deeply insulting and even shameful. For the Lepchas of Zongu however the story was without unpleasant affect; it is frequently repeated as a curious and amusing anecdote, and a certain respect is felt for those people who can boast of actually having seen snakes eaten. It seems improbable that these Lepchas would feel any repulsion to eating serpents if they thought they could do so with impunity; their disgust reactions are very limited; they will eat dead domestic animals and even carrion found in the forest; and they prefer their meat to be as high as possible, provided it is not maggoty. Except during the training of the Mun priests there are no food prohibitions of any sort, except the ban on horse and dog flesh ('He who could eat the flesh of

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favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

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There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

823 773

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-*zel oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

776

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

[751 824]

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556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [736] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

● 773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 531 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

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the tips of the *shang-no* tree, but of that tree only." The daughter went and gathered the twigs and put them into her mother's lap. Then the mother said "If I can cover the sun with these twigs I can go all over the world. Watch what I do." Then she went out on to the verandah and threw up the twigs, so that the sun was covered and she would be able to go all over the world. Then she returned to the house and said to her daughter "You had better go soon, for your maternal uncles will be coming to look for my body. They will take away three bags of jewels and only leave you three tiny necklaces; but wear those and look after them. They will take all the cattle and only leave you one baby calf; look after that. Do not be sad, for in seven days a man will come and marry you, and your children will be *Jem-mi* (that is Mandal) of this place. Now go away." The daughter did as she was told.

773 539

'When morning broke the brothers came to fetch the corpse, but they could see nothing; only there was a trail of blood leading to a lake situated above a big tree, and behind that a cliff with a door in it. The mother entered that cliff and there she *munthen* (performed the religious contemplation of the Mun) for seven days.

'Meanwhile the brothers had divided the property just as had been prophesied; and the girl stayed with her calf and her three small necklaces in the shed; and in seven days a hunter arrived and lived with her and married her. This hunter was named Tsel-telim, and from him the Tsel-telim *ptso* sprang.[4]

'For seven days the mother *munthen* and at last she summoned the devils from their home; she vowed vengeance on all who had great wealth or many children and she sent out the devils. These devils are called Ginoo *moong pan-di* ('Queen devil Ginoo') after the name of the murderers, and Lingthem *anyou* ('Lady Lingthem') after the place of the murder.

'Within one year all the huge family had died and the door of their house was closed. Lower down in the valley was another family which had ten married sons and ten married daughters. These too Ginoo *moong* attacked and killed, all except two women called Safi and Sakyon who were weeding the distant fields. But as they were weeding they heard a voice saying "I want Safi." "I want Sakyon." The next morning when they woke up in the field house they both had elephantiasis and quickly died.

[4] See Chapter Five, p. 127. Serving is the last survivor of this *ptso* in the neighbourhood.

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773 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy
539 all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the
[421] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what
124] their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority
[556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side
[249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is
[242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

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been a reason for, a general gathering of all the members of the *ptso*. A traveller among strange people has no claim on the hospitality of unknown members of his *ptso*, though it would still be shameful for two members of the same *ptso* to have sexual connection. More than anything else, the *ptso* is a device for the prevention of incest. 614

iii

Incest for the Lepchas is horrifying; they do not call it a sin but *nam-toak*, an act which produces a year of disaster for the community. Sin is a lamaist conception and is on the whole only applied to acts like the killing of animals; *nam-toak* is the phrase used for personal acts which are felt to be strongly anti-social. Any sexual connection with blood relations for nine generations on the father's side and four on the mother's is considered incestuous; but children under the age of puberty, or, as the Lepchas say 'who are not old enough to know shame', are not considered capable of committing incest and no watch is kept on children's play. Besides blood relations sexual connection with the following relations-by-marriage is considered as incestuous: for a man to sleep with any of the women he calls 'mother-in-law' or 'daughter-in-law' (that is his wife's mother, his wife's elder sister, the wife of his wife's elder brother, and his sons' wives, the wives of his *younger* brothers, and the wives of his brothers' and sisters' sons); for a woman, to sleep with any of the men she calls 'father-in-law' or 'son-in-law' (that is her husband's father, her husband's *elder* brothers, the husband of her husband's elder sister, and her daughter's husbands, the husbands of her younger sisters, and the husbands of her brothers' and sisters' daughters). Such relationships, besides causing a year of disaster to the community, would call down a devil on to the guilty couple who would cover them with sores. Should children result from such a union they would be allowed to live, but they would either be of an evil mind or idiots, and would be short-lived. 835

No cases of mother-son or father-daughter incest are known of; nor does the situation occur in any mythological story. Brother-sister incest on the other hand is a motive in a great deal of Mun mythology, inevitably so, for the world and all that therein is are the children of Itpomu the Creative Mother. The origin of devils and noxious animals arises from the incest of her first two 'human' children (if I can so express it) Komsi*ching* and Narzong-*nyou*. I only heard of one case of true brother-sister incest, and that 835 835 773

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my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children 163
have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other 165
than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of 161
Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children [777]
chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size [773]
of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

ix

Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen 597
married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today.

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein.

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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773 539 married, and as a consequence all their children were devils and snakes and lizards. As soon as they were born their mother cast them aside without giving them milk. Finally she produced a normal child called Rilbu Shingbu whom she nursed; but when the devils saw this child getting the milk that had been denied them they were jealous and they took counsel and killed the child. Their incest was betrayed by the dog who guarded the door. When the parents were shamed and the child killed they buried the child in the black rock on the right of the Talung valley, which can be seen to this day, and thereafter in disgust they divided their property and separated. Komsi*thing* went to Tibet and he took with him all the riches and jewels and animals which the Tibetans have till this day. Narzong-*nyou* turned towards our country but she was careless and that is why our country is so poor.

'After that Komsi*thing* summoned all the devils to him and all came except Doam *moong* who is the devil of leprosy, and he counselled the devils and said to them "You are devils and you must act according to your nature; but you must take an oath that when men are born you will accept them if they give you pigs and oxen and rice and other things to eat; if you are looked after you must go away, you must obey the Mun and Padem and the sacrificer". They all took this oath except Doam *moong* who was not present and that is the reason why you can never drive him away and leprosy cannot be cured.

'But still there was no Mun; Itpomu had placed all the devils in the big plain Azum Patham; but there they had nothing to eat. So then Itpomu created the Mun spirit and sent her to feed them. When the Mun arrived at Azum Patham she said to the devils "You are older than I am and I am helpless; I will return to Itpomu". But the devils begged her to stay, saying that if she went away they would always be hungry; if she stayed they would promise to obey her. They swore this by three great oaths; first they cut their finger nails and swore on them: then they spat on the Kashou tree and the tree withered, finally they spat in the sea and the sea dried up. Since that time the Mun must find out what sacrifices are needed and give them to the devils and the devils will always obey them.'

773 539 581 The other important story for which *loong* has to be obtained before it can be publicly repeated is the story of the *Origin of Marriage*. With its internal repetitions and lists of names it takes between two and three hours to repeat; it is always repeated

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat 539 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two 581 points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for [881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities 776 Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older ●773 people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told 841 in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; 539 it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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APPENDIX IV

THE SACRED STORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

(This is one of the two Lepcha stories which can only be recited by those people who have obtained the ceremonial qualification or *loong*. The other story is the long Mun genesis (see Chapter Eight, p. 223) of which the greater part consists of a long catalogue of names.

The sacred story of the origin of marriage has to be repeated in its entirety by the officiant at each marriage. It takes between two and three hours to rehearse, owing to the innumerable internal repetitions and culminations which I have indicated in brackets. Nearly every paragraph is repeated twice, and some many times more.)

539
581
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When Itpomu had completed creation there were no husbands and wives. The last person she bore was a son called Tarbong-bo whom she nursed. When the child grew big enough to work he told his mother that he would like to travel and see the world. His mother said "No, you are too young" but he insisted, and so she cooked some rice for him and put it into his knapsack. So the next morning he travelled by the road called Parhi Pageun and came to the top of Paki Chu; from there he went down to Palyang Chu, which is a mountain above Sakhyong and can be seen on a clear day. From there he saw the *palit samper koong* tree covered with fruits, and *pedong*, *taryong athyak kanyoong* and many other birds eating the fruit. When he saw that he sat down and ate his rice; then he returned home in the evening and climbed on to his mother's lap and sucked her milk. His mother then asked "What did you see?" He told her what he had seen (*verbal repetition*). Then his mother said "If you are my son you must go and get *yongming yongsong* (which is a kind of bamboo) and the thread *komok ki* (to make traps)." That night he slept at home and the next day he went and got what his mother had said, cutting down the bamboos and returned home. The day after that he went back to Palyang Chu and made snares with the threads and set them on the trees and returned and climbed on his mother's lap and told her what he had done. His mother told him that he must go back early in the morning. He did so and found all the different sorts of birds caught in the snares, so many that they made a full load. When he had collected the birds he reset the snares and then went home and said to his mother "Mother, if these birds are good to eat, eat them and take them as my repayment for your milk: if they are no good, throw them away." Itpomu replied "They are good to eat: and I accept them as a recompense for my milk."

The next morning Tarbong returned to the tree, but instead of birds in the traps he found in every trap a penis, exactly like real life, made out of wood.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

539 Tarbong was angry at this, threw the penises away, and reset the traps. Then he went home and climbed on to his mother's lap and said "Mother, today
581 I have nothing to bring you; there were no birds in the traps, just penises of wood." At this his mother said "If you are my son, you will go and hide your-
773 self so carefully that even the birds cannot see you, and then in your hiding place you can stay and see who does this thing." The next morning he returned and found the snares again full of penises; he threw them away, and reset the snares and then hid himself so well that even the birds could not see him. After a time a beautiful girl dressed in *kaji lasong* (nettle cloth) arrived and started to make wooden penises. She was very beautiful; her name was Na Rip Nom, and her mother was Ta Im Ta Mit. Tarbong was angry when he saw her doing this and he climbed up the tree to try to stop her, and they struggled and rolled hither and thither; and then he got excited and tried to rape her, but he could not do so and so they separated and he went home and climbed on his mother's lap and said to her "Mother, I have come home without any birds." "What did you see, my son?" "I found Naripnom making penises of wood, and I tried to copulate with her, but I could not. So I return empty-handed. She is very beautiful." Then Itpomu said "If you want to possess that girl you had better go to your elder brother Komsi*thing* who lives at Rungzing Patham."

So Tarbong went to Komsi*thing*, and when he saw his younger brother he asked him why he had come. So Tarbong told him (*recapitulation*): "This girl was putting penises in my traps, and I wanted to possess her but could not, and my mother advised me to come to you." Then Komsi-*thing* said "How can you expect to possess the girl unless you give the marriage price *nyomsa afaar* and make a sacrifice with *chi* and butter *sakyou tsok rum-faat?* Do you love this girl?" "Very much." "Then I advise you to go to your *ingʔong* in Nepal and get from him the pig of the plains Malu Mayeng and buy a copper vessel." So Tarbong went to Nepal and brought back a pig and a copper vessel. When he returned Komsi*thing* said "I advise you to go to your *ingʔong* in Bhutan to get the cloth *kamo*." So he went to Bhutan and returned with the cloth, and then he had the pig and the copper pot and the cloth. (*The story cumulates—The House that Jack Built.*) From his Tibetan *ingʔong* he got a rug Numbo. From Mayel near Konchen he got millet. From Kanyong (Sikkim) he got an ox.

Now at this time there was no fire in the world; it was only in the land between earth and heaven called Mashyok Matel where the demons dwelt, in the houses of the Deut *moong* who were smiths and were called Tangshyo Tangong Karvo. Now when Komsi*thing* told Tarbong to go there to fetch fire to cook the millet he was frightened and said he would not go among the devils for then they would eat him. So Komsi*thing* called on all human beings and animals and birds and insects to volunteer to go and fetch the fire, promising rewards of gold and jewels and rich cloths. When this offer was made the bird Kahryok Fo smiled and said "I will go for a reward." And the bird flew there and found the smith's house empty as all the people were out working elsewhere, so it took a brand in its beak from the fireplace and flew back. On its way back it came to the Kashou tree (chestnut); there it felt hungry, and laid the brand on a branch while it looked for fruit. But the wind blew and the flames sprang up and a great fire raged over the world, and the bird was caught

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in it; that is the reason why till this day it has short feathers and a black face. It was ashamed and did not return to Komsi*thing*.

Komsi*thing* waited for the bird but it did not come and he saw the fire, so he asked for another volunteer; and this time an insect (? *wasp or firefly—like a grasshopper, but flies*) *taknyom nomyor nyom* volunteered to go for a reward. When it got to the smith's house all the Deut *moong* were away, so it lay on its back by the fireplace and looked at the house upside down; and the whole house turned upside down. When the Deut *moong* returned from the west it found its house upside down and searched and found the insect who had done it lying on its back; he tried to catch it, but it wriggled and flew away. The Deut *moong* said "Why have you upset my house in this way? I shall kill you for it." The insect said "If you do kill me, your house will never get straight again." "Please don't do that. What have you come for?" "Komsi*thing* has sent me to fetch fire." "I will give you some, if you promise to straighten my house; but you cannot carry fire in your mouth." "Yes, I can." They argued, and finally the insect took a brand in its mouth, and the Deut *moong* put a flint and tinder up its backside. On his return the insect rested by the Mong Ing Pong tree, and put down the brand at the foot of the tree; but the wind came and blew it to a blaze and the insect got therefrom a black face. But it flew back to Komsi*thing* and gave him the flint and tinder from his backside, since he had lost the brand; and he told him all that the Deut *moong* had told him, and showed him how to make a fire with dry grass. So they made a fire and cooked the millet in the copper vessel, but, when the millet was cooked they found they had no yeast.

The only person who possessed yeast was an old woman who lived in the plains called Numli-*nyou*; so Komsi*thing* asked who would volunteer to go and fetch it, promising great rewards. The insect *takder thing* said it would go and it went to live with the old woman for some days and helped her. One day she started to prepare *chi*, and cooked the millet; but when it came to the moment of putting in the yeast she covered *takder* with a close woven basket *tangar*. But when *takder* was inside he cried "Grandmother, in this basket I can see everything which is going on in the world; if you want to hide something from me you should cover me with a *tangjang* (this is a loose woven basket)." The old woman believed what he said and covered him with a *tangjang* and so he could see all that she was doing, though he pretended he could not. He saw her take a pot from the back of her neck, and pour something from it into her hands. Then she rubbed her hands together and scattered the dust over the cooked millet; she replaced the pot; and put the millet in the basket. Then *takder* cried "Grandmother, please take me out of this basket; I am suffocating." So Numli-*nyou* removed the basket.

After two days the lovely smell of ferment rose from the millet, and then the old woman put it in an earthen pot and covered the pot well up, and stood it over the fire. *Takder* tried to get the pot with yeast in it, but he could not; at last he hit on a plan. He told Numli-*nyou* he could see a louse in her hair and asked her to let him remove it: she agreed so he jumped on her shoulders and started delousing her. While this operation was going on Numli-*nyou* became sleepy; and then *takder* removed the pot very very slowly and very very quietly and ran away. When he was half-way away she woke up and missed *takder*. Then she discovered the theft and saw him running away and shouted after him

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

539 "I thought you were my grandson, but I see you are nothing but a thief; you have stolen my yeast and will give it to everybody all over the world. So
581 I set my curse on it; may it make everybody who drinks it drunk and quarrel-
773 some." And so it has been; when people get drunk they quarrel.

When *takder* returned to Komsi*thing* with the yeast, Komsi*thing* asked him if he knew how to make *chi*: *takder* said he did (*complete recapitulation*) and they followed his instructions; but since they had no earthenware pots to put the fermented *chi* in they put it in baskets, well covered with leaves. Then Komsi*thing* asked *Taknyom* what reward he desired for bringing the fire: *Taknyom* replied "Gold and jewels and clothes are no use to an animal; what I want is to be given the plants *mangder* and *sanghi* which grow in the valley." (*He was given these.*) Similarly *Takder* (*complete recapitulation*) was granted the leavings at the bottom of the spoons and plates and patyoot.

When the *chi* was ready all were afraid to be the first to drink. Eventually the snake Putsong *beu* was summoned and drank it; when it had drunk it dashed away like lightning. Seeing this all the gods and men were frightened to drink. After that the snake Pamol *beu* was summoned; but when it had drunk it ran about biting people and animals so that they all died. (When Sangé *rum* saw that the snake would kill everybody if it was allowed to behave so he set a lock on its mouth; and nowadays it bites very few people.) Next the snake Poblyok *beu* was summoned: when it had drunk it fell senseless. Komsi*thing* gave that snake the ferns to live in; it is harmless. After this they thought that the *chi* was harmless; but then they found they had no butter for *Sakyou faat*. So Komsi*thing* went to Itpomu and asked for butter so that they could *Sakyou faat* for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripmu. He said to his mother "We have the *chi*, but no butter." Itpomu said "Get a bamboo *yongtong*," and when he had got it she filled it with the butter which she had from her cows. Then on her instructions nine containers (*takner*) of *chi* were prepared, and their edges were smeared with butter.

Now all the gods and men gathered for the marriage of Tarbong and Naripnom. Everything was prepared in due order; all the gifts were placed on one side, and then Komsi*thing* *rum faat* with *chi* and *sakyou*. This is the reason why today when a marriage is celebrated all the gods are worshipped, and these gifts are given. Only when Tarbong and Naripmu were husband and wife was he able to possess her. This is the reason why to-day Lepchas still give the same gifts; this is BRI-IT, the origin of marriage.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
[491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

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CHAPTER 4

Origin of the Lepchas and Village Administration

●773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

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614 The Lepcha tribe is composed of a number of clans, called
619 *pu-tso*. No one can say how many clans there are, for this grouping seems to be a purely local one. In the Kalimpong district I recorded the names of over forty different clans, but in Lingtem there were but fourteen, all of them different from those I had already collected. There does not appear ever to have been any sort of tribal organisation, nor even a tribal leader; and while I use the word clan to denote these collections of people, it would be better to regard them as merely belonging to one large family, which is in fact what
614 they are. We shall probably never know what functions the clan formerly possessed, but its sole use nowadays is in regulating marriage, it being impossible for a man to marry a girl of the same *pu-tso* as his own. Ethnologists call this custom exogamy: but Lepcha exogamy is of a special kind, for it does permit a man to marry a relative of his father provided the relationship is removed by five (but some say seven) generations. Such a marriage is of course only possible with a person descended through the father's sister, since she, having married into another clan, belongs to a different *pu-tso*. In the case of a marriage between the descendants of two sisters a separation of only three generations is demanded. In actual practice all this means is that any two related people, provided they do not both belong to the same clan, may marry provided the relationship between them is sufficiently distant as to have been forgotten for all practical purposes.

Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct. 614 773

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession. 636

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all 636 636 622 [65] 636

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
177 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
778 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

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[249] It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
773 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

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came to a place called Sakyong Pantong, where the Mayel773 people disappeared into the forest. By diligent searching, however, the Lepchas discovered their tracks. They followed the signs as far as Lungzong Chachyo(?) and then completely lost them, after which they returned and settled in Jonga.

They used to wear clothes made from nettles and hats of plaited cane, like those once worn by the Lepchas. They cultivated rice; also pumpkins, chillies, maize, and manioc, which they used to take and sell in the market at Zikchu Thum, a place in Tibet, and somewhere between Chumbi and Lhasa. They did not wish to be recognised; and it was for this reason that they went so far to dispose of their products. But during this time the Maharaja had been forced to remove his court to Chumbi (see Chapter 3) and his servants were in the habit of going to Zikchu on market days. Being for the most part Lepchas they, of course, recognised the Mayel people. They told the Maharaja what they had seen; but since the court shortly returned to Sikkim there was no opportunity to see them again; but it is believed they no longer leave Mayel.

Myths of this sort are, of course, constantly being re-interpreted; and of this particular one there are endless variations. Here is the version given by Jiroong:

"It is three days' journey from Lingtem to Mayel, which773 was once visited by my great-grandfather. He was out539 hunting at the time and came to a place where there were many big trees and a stream. He noticed a piece of wood floating on the water. It was moving slowly along and he decided to follow it. He came eventually to a narrow path, so narrow as to be like a knife-blade, where he saw some feathers lying on the ground. They belonged to a Mayel bird, which is the mother of all migratory birds that come to Jongu. He followed this path for three more days and came eventually to a village, where there were seven big and well-built houses. This was the village of Mayel; but at the time he did not know it. He went to the first house and asked for

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773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

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439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
[435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

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224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con- [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall- [757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth, [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847
are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 848] and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847
she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all 593 clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's 842 sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a 842 request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a [773] tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptak klong*. It consists in taking large quantities [431] of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773 ●
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."

773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

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581 539 ●773 then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyom-far*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

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539 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of
581 devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which
773 I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

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it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539
mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581
you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773
like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285]
such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285]
special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

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581 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour some-
539 thing out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was,
●773 she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi;* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

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cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to live on such things up to the present day. 581 539 773

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5
Sikkim AK3

1. The first and main propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim was Lama *Lha btsun nam mkha hjigs med* (shortly called *Lha btsun chhen po*) who belonged to the Tibetan *rDzogs chhen pa* Sect. He was later joined by a number of other learned priests, among whom the *rNying ma pa* Lama *Kha thog kun tu bzang po* and Lama *mNga bdag seme pa phun tshogs rig hdzin* were the two most outstanding personalities. It seems that the work of spreading Buddhism in Sikkim was begun in 1642, in which year also the coronation of the first Maharaja of Sikkim, *Phun tshogs rnam rgyal* is said to have taken place. After *Lha btsun chhen po's* death his first reincarnation, called *Mi bskyod dga ba*, was found at *hBum thang in Bhutan*. S 797

2. The influx of Tibetan settlers began with the advent of *Gyad hbum bsags* the ancestor of the present ruling family of the Sikkim State, who reached this area via the Chumbi Valley (Tb. *Gro mo*) towards the end of the 16th century. *Gyad hbum bsags* was accompanied by a number of Tibetan retainers, who settled in Sikkim—which they called *hBras ljongs* the "Rice Country"—and who became kown as "Bhutias". They were the ancestors of the eight clans, into which the local Tibetan population became later divided. In the following centuries, also other groups of settlers arrived in Sikkim, partly from the Bhutanese districts of Ha and Pharo, and some even from Assam. In connection with the account of the first encounter between the Tibetans and the aboriginal inhabitants, the Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim mention an interesting episode: "as the (Tibetan) party happened to be riding on ponies, and some of the retainers had matchlock guns, which they went on firing along the road, the simple natives who had never seen ponies nor firearms, said to others, that the entire party rode on huge hogs, and some of them bore sticks, which produced great sounds." S 563

3. The Limbus, who call themselves Yakthumba, are mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim, together with the Mangar tribe, under the collective name *Tshong*; the name 'Limbu' under which they are mostly known, is of Nepali origin. According to a doubtful oral tradition, they are supposed to have migrated into Sikkim from the neighbouring Tibetan province of *Tshang*. The Limbus, who were divided into ten clans, were living peacefully side by side with the Lepchas, who regarded them as distant relatives and even claimed, that the Lepcha and Limbu gods were related to each other.—The Chronicles mention, that Limbus sometimes occupied important positions in the administration of the Sikkim State, and a Limbu lady became one of the wives of the second Maharaja. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the rule of the fourth Maharaja, the majority of the Limbus left Sikkim in consequence of the heavy labour, which was being imposed on them, especially at times of the frequent raids of the neighbouring Nepalese and Bhutanese.

4. All Lepcha words, the orthography of which it was possible to ascertain, are printed in italics according to a simplified romanization, similar to the system of transcription adopted in the Dictionary of the Lepcha Languages, by G. B. Mainwaring and A. Gruenwedel, Berlin 1898. Also all Tibetan words are rendered in an orthographic romanization. L 104

5. About the Bardo and the beliefs connected with it see Evans-Wentz, W.Y: The Tibetan Book of the Dead, London 1927, and Tucci, G.: Il libro tibetano dei morti, Milano 1949.

6. To all those among the Lepchas who supplied me with valuable informations concerning the subject here dealt with, especially to Mrs. D. Mohan of Kalimpong, Mr. K. P. Tamsang, the Mandal of Bong Basti and to one of the oldest living Lepchas, the 105 years old "Manibu Badschi" of Nyim, my sincere thanks are due; I would also like to acknowledge gratefully the valuable assistance, rendered to me by Miss Ray Williams of Kalimpong and Father J. M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission at Gik.

7. I was unable to obtain a confirmation of the statement made by Kali Kumar Das in his The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell, JBTS, Vol. VI, Pt. 1, Calcutta 1896, p. 4, that the Lepchas believe in the presence of eight different souls in the human body.

8. They are supposed to have been created from the ice of the Kanchenjunga glaciers by the foremost god of the Lepchas *Ta she thing* (or *Tuk bo thing* ?).—It is today, with traditions quickly vanishing, rather difficult to establish the name of this God Creator. Due to the adoption of the name *Ta she* for Padmasambhava (Tb. *Padma hbyung gnas*) the main and widely venerated saint of the Unreformed Buddhist School of Tibet and the resulting L 773

[i.e., human souls, see cat. 116, p. 27. —Analyst]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tuk bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bo* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names, under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-195[illegible]/1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-putso-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namtseemo (Namtsi), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil. While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 184

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Ne zong ngo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyud kbum bongs*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyud kbum bongs* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tass Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *heTsa herung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773
[i.e., during the funeral rites. —Analyst]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

●773 in whose neighbourhood they had settled, two or three clans often worshipping the same mountain. It became customary, that each clan had to perform an annual sacrifice to the spirit of its particular mountain. In regard to marriage, there is no obstacle—unless
582 a blood relationship exists or that people belong actually to the same clan—that members of two clans, which venerate the same peak, should not intermarry. In case that bride and bridegroom belong to clans, which worship two different mountains, the wife will have to sacrifice after the marriage to the sacred peak of her husbands clan.

18. They are made from a certain kind of reed; on the top of the stick cuts are made in
791 such a way, that these parts open in the form of a flower. These sticks are regarded as the symbol of the magical power, over which the sorcerer commands.[1]

1 [see cat. 116, p. 36. - Analyst]

6:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) AK5 Lepcha AK5

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/889/ The Lepcha Legend of the Building of the Tower

By René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz

Contents:

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114 Part of the legendary material of the peoples living in the maharajah state of Sikkim at the foot of the Central Himalayas has already been treated by various people, and also a number of traditions of the Lepchas—the largest group of the original inhabitants of this territory—have been mentioned in numerous publications. (1)

1. Cf. Kali Kumar Das, "The Lepcha people and their notions of heaven and hell," Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society (Calcutta) Volume VI (1896). —C. de Beauvoir-Stocks, "Folk-lore and customs of the Lap-chas of Sikhim," Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. 21 (1925). — G. Gorer, Himalayan Village (London, 1938). — J. Morris, Living with Lepchas (London, 1938).

114 Singularly enough, however, one of the legends best known among
113 the Lepchas has not received—with the exception of two brief references—closer treatment in any of the pertinent works that have appeared to date: this is a tradition that tells of the unsuccessful project of the Lepcha people to construct a tower of clay pots reaching the vault of heaven.

172 One of the reasons for the survival of this legend is the circum-
114 stance that at the supposed site of the tower potsherds have been dug

114 up from time to time by the local population while working in the
172 fields. Two decades ago these findings aroused the attention of a specialist; Sir Charles Bell, at that time Political Officer of Sikkim, had several of the discovered fragments brought to him, and at his direction the legend of the tower was also put down in writing. Unfortunately, however, this material never received a proper evaluation. —Through the courtesy of Sri T. N. Pulger, the owner of the Daramdin estate, within whose boundaries the site of the legendary tower building is situated today, I was able to obtain a reproduction of the report written for Sir Charles Bell and to take it into account in the present work.

/890/ 1. First Version

•773 Most Lepchas who know the legend of the tower building are convinced that this enterprise was carried out by the original ancestors of the Lepcha people. This view is also expressed in the following Lepcha text which is reproduced first in orthographic transcription and then in translation.

/Lepcha text follows./ (2)

2. The text was translated with the kind assistance of Pastor T. S. Targain (Kalimpong).

The Story of the Ta-lom Plain

539 Long, long ago, when the creation of the world was completed,
773 the Lepcha people, increasing in number after its creation, descended from /891/ the glacier mountain, (3) and the land of Ma-yel (4) was

3. According to legend, the Lepcha people had its origin on the mountain of Kanchenjunga, from whose glacial ice the original ancestral couple is supposed to have been created.

4. Concerning the land of Ma-yel cf. Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 235 f.

•773 539 filled with young Lepchas. At that time they decided to do the following: "We will build a tower in order to climb up to the sky and to pull it down with a hook"; this they had decided. Then they made the decision to pile small clay pots one upon the other [and in this way to build a tower]. The place they chose was the plain of Ta-lom. Here, in order to carry out the work, they divided all the people into three groups: first, a group who formed the pots from crushed earth; second, [a group] of bearers; and third, those who placed the pots in layers; thus they were divided.

Now they heaped the vessels one upon the other and, placing them in layers, they almost reached the sky; at this time they already saw the sky very near; those who were working on top—when they caught sight of the sky so close at hand—thought: "If we had a forked stick, then we could pull down the sky." Then they called down to those who were below: "Hand us a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those down below understood: "Tear down, knock down!" Those working at the top of the tower then called again: "Hand up a forked stick, we want to pull down the sky!" But those below once again understood: "Tear down!" Now those working below cried: "Shall we tear it down?" Then those above cried out in anger: "Yes, tear down! Tear down!"

So those who were down below now got hammers, axes, and clubs and began to shatter the vessels at the base. When they had already made good progress in their work, the tower suddenly came tumbling down, crushing everything. Those who had climbed up to the top as well as those who had worked close to the foot of the tower were all killed by the clay pots falling upon them. Those who survived could, however, no longer communicate with each other.

But to construct a tower like this, no one was capable formerly except the Lepchas; and the experienced men who could teach such work, these were Lepchas. Up until that time they had all spoken the same language, but now, since they could no longer understand one another, they parted ways. Some of them went up [to the north], some down [to the south], others to the east and some to the west. As a result of this separation they settled the entire world, and thus there arose the numerous peoples and tribes existing today. —The place to which [the Lepchas] descended from the glacier mountain after their creation, lies in present-day Sikkim, and it is a plain upon which a great rice field is now located.

/892/ 2. Second Version

773 614 Another version of the legend of the tower building, one which makes a claim to greater exactness, asserts that the erection of the tower was not undertaken by the ancestors of the Lepchas, but by a sib belonging to the Lepcha people which had the name Na ong. In present day Lepcha the word Na ong means "stupid fellow," —but it is probable that it took on this derogatory sense only later through the association of the sib name Na ong with the tradition of the absurd and unsuccessful tower building. In addition to the word Na ong sometimes the expression Chelickchom is also used as a designation for this clan; the latter word appears to come from the language of the Limbus, a people related to the Lepchas, and would thus strengthen the view encountered among the Limbus that the so-called Na ong or Chelickchoms were not Lepchas, but Limbus.

114 614 The chronicle of the maharajahs of Sikkim—in which the Na ong are listed among the Lepcha sibs—as well as the few scholarly publications that mention the name Na ong (5) report unanimously that

5. Das, The Lepcha people, p. 5.—G. B. Mainwaring, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), p. XX. —G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language (Berlin, 1898), p. 189b. —De Beauvoir-Stocks, p. 359.

that sib has long been extinct. This assertion, to be sure, is not precisely true, for even at the beginning of this century there lived, near the place at which originally the tower was supposed to have been constructed, a family whose members regarded themselves as the last descendants of the Na ong tribe. In designating themselves they used the expression "tribe" /Stamm/. The head of this family, a man named Karandal, seems, however, to have been the only one who was still very familiar with the traditions of the Na ong. It was therefore he who gave the information for the report handed over to Sir Charles Bell. According to the information of the last preserver of the Na ong traditions, the building of the tower and the later history of the tribe ran as follows:

773 539 It was in gray primeval times that the tribe of the Na ong came into the world. The place that supposedly became the birthplace of

713
539

this tribe is situated in Sikkim, close to the confluence of the Raman and the Lingkhim Khola, within the realm of the Daramdin Estate. The ancestors of the Na ong, created inside the earth, emerged here from a gigantic hollowed boulder, which one could still see on the bank of the Raman a generation ago. (6)

6. During the heavy rains of the year 1899 this boulder was dragged deeper into the river bed where it is finally supposed to have sunk in the sand.

After their arrival on the surface of the earth the Na ong settled down at the place called Phugamdin, which today lies in the north-eastern part of the great rice field belonging to the Daramdin estate. /893/ — One day they became aware of the vault of heaven spreading above their heads, and since they thought that it was very low, they decided to build a tower of pots in order to reach the sky.— Since all the members of the tribe declared themselves in agreement with this plan, they immediately began to carry it out. The foundation of the tower was erected on the level surface of the present day Daramdin Field. The work progressed rapidly, and the building finally became so high that only two or three pots were still needed in order to complete the work. Because of this, the men working at the top of the tower became very excited. They called down to the helpers working below to hand up the required number of pots quickly. Now the command was passed down from man to man through the long chain of helpers, and when it finally reached the workers at the foot of the tower, its sense was already completely distorted; for now they understood it to mean that the tower was no longer necessary and should be torn down because the men standing at the top had already reached the sky. The men, women and children on the ground therefore proceeded to smash the lowest pots and as a result the entire construction collapsed with a terrible roar, burying beneath it all the members of the tribe. During its fall the tower broke into three great pieces, one of which fell on the mountain called Kaijalia within the limits of the present day Karmi estate, while a second portion of the tower plunged onto the Maney Hill in the precincts of the Relling estate, and the third piece finally came down near the village of Phedap, in the Nepalese district of Ilam. By the impact the above-mentioned mountains were pressed in to such an extent that today they show a clear saddle form.

●113 539 Only a single man escaped from the disaster alive. Frightened by what had happened and fearing the wrath of the divinity, which in his opinion had brought about the annihilation of the members of his tribe, he determined to leave the place of misfortune and to seek an abode in Nepalese territory.

Therefore he went to the village of Phedap, where he married one of the girls of this place. In the course of time once again a tribe was formed from his numerous descendants. It likewise was designated as Na ong. But this generation of the Na ong also didn't prove to be much smarter than its ancestors.

[118] One day the Na ong decided to kill the fish in the sacred river Mai-khola, which flows near the village of Phedap. This river was regarded as the seat of a mighty divinity, to whom at one time thousands of animals were sacrificed once a year by the local Nepalese population. The blood of these animals colored the stream red for days.

The Na ong thought now that the local millet beer, called marwa, was probably the best poison to kill the fish; since it could make a strong man drunk, it was surely well-suited to destroy all the fish living in this river. Therefore they poured /894/ huge quantities of millet beer into the stream, but the divinity of the river, enraged by this sacrilege, killed the entire tribe on the spot. Only a boy and an old woman escaped annihilation.

The woman took care of the boy, and when he had finally grown to manhood, he married, (7) and his descendants again lived in the

7. Tradition does not tell to what tribe his wife belonged.

village Phedap. But the tribe never again flourished — a fact ascribed to the displeasure of the river god who, despite all the sacrifices offered to it by subsequent generations of the Na ong, would not be pacified. When finally only a few Na ong were alive, about sixty years ago, one of them named Kaipal decided to leave the settlement on the banks of the Mai-khola and move with his family near the place where his ancestors had once built the tower; for here — so he thought — the remainder of the tribe would escape the wrath of the river god and, under the protection of the ancestral spirits, would again increase in number. His son Karandal, the transmitter of this legend, later married a Limbu girl from the Malboma sib in the new

113 539 dwelling place; this marriage produced four sons and three daughters, who, however, were apparently absorbed in the families of the neighboring Limbu. Thus the tribe of Na ong was finally completely extinguished.

113 The place where, according to the legend, the construction of the tower was undertaken is a plateau about two kilometers square situated in the western part of Sikkim, near the Indian-Nepalese border. To the west it is screened by a chain of mountains; to the south and the northeast it is bounded by two rivers. In the deeply fissured landscape of the Himalayan foothills a level plain of such proportions is a great rarity, and hence the plateau is clearly visible from a distance. It was subsequently transformed almost completely into a rice field, and only its extreme eastern corner, which bears the name Phugamdin and where — according to the legend — the first settlement of the Na ong arose, is uncultivated and today serves as a burial place for the Limbus, who recently settled in this part of Sikkim. (8)

8. A scholarly work on the burial methods of the Limbus — as well as an exhaustive investigation of this tribe — has unfortunately not yet been written. According to reports available up to now, the Limbu dead are generally buried, but sometimes cremated. Without doubt, however, the potsherds discovered in Daramdin cannot be grave-goods of the Limbus, for the Lepchas, who are sufficiently aware of the customs of this neighboring tribe — would in this case have ascribed no special significance to such findings.

172 While people are farming on the plateau — especially during the spring plowing — potsherds are constantly discovered; understandably enough, these findings are connected by the local inhabitants to the legend of the tower. Despite repeated questioning I still have not yet succeeded in obtaining some of the findings for closer examination; apparently the unearthed fragments are heedlessly thrown away by the populace.

/895/ The conditions which prevail at present in the Tibetan-Indian border region make it impossible, for the time being, to undertake any extensive investigation on the spot, and particularly any systematic excavations. I must therefore limit myself here to the observation that, according to the statement of the local inhabitants,

172 the fragments reveal a clearly convex shape and seem to come from uncommonly strong pots made of baked clay. Until now I have been unable to determine whether other objects such as bones, tools, weapons, etc. are occasionally also found along with the fragments.

3. Explanations

●773 In conclusion, after a short summary, I should like to attempt a
172 few explanations of what has been said above. —The stories that occur among many peoples of the world dealing with the Flood and the building of a tower reaching to the sky also belong to the oldest and most strongly rooted traditions of the Lepchas. The current version of the legend of the tower building places the site on the plateau of Laramdin. As a proof, so to speak, of the correctness of this tradition, it is cited that right up to the present day the fragments of the pots from which the tower supposedly was built can be found here. Yet it seems questionable to me whether the doubtlessly very old tower legend was always brought into connection with the discoveries made in Daramdin. I suspect rather that the first potsherd discoveries were made in the course of the more intensive farming carried out in this region during the last hundred years; these soon brought about a corresponding variation of the legend. Supporting this assumption is a remark contained in G. B. Mainwaring's A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language (Calcutta, 1876), one of the oldest publications about the Lepchas. The relevant passage, found on page XX of the Introduction, states: "On the top of the lofty Sung li hlo, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas (Na ong), now extinct, endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rocks and blocks of stones as the ruins are shown on the place."

As is evident, in this version of the legend, written down more than seven decades ago, neither the plateau of Daramdin nor the use of clay pots is mentioned, and the place of the action is moved to the mountain Sung li hlo in the vicinity of Darjeeling.

172 It will be possible to give an absolutely sound explanation of the type and date of the discovered vessel fragments only after an intensive investigation of a large number of the findings. Possibly the potsherds stem from an early settlement that later was lost to oblivion. —The protected plateau would have offered a very favorable spot for such a settlement. Likewise it would not be out of the question that these settlers were Lepcha sibs or a people closely related to them, who used clay vessels as household objects.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Before proceeding to narrate my different expeditions into Sikkim and Nepal from Dorjiling, I shall give a sketch of 128 the different peoples and races composing the heterogeneous population of Sikkim and the neighbouring mountains.

The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and 101 the prominent character in Dorjiling, where he undertakes 144 all sorts of out-door employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalese and Bhotanese, between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth. The Lepchas possess 773 a tradition of the flood, during which a couple escaped to the top of a mountain (Tendong) near Dorjiling. The 173 earliest traditions which they have of their history date no further back than some three hundred years, when they describe themselves as having been long-haired, half-clad savages. At about that period they were visited by Tibetans, who introduced Boodh worship, the platting of their hair into pig-tails, and very many of their own customs. Their physiognomy is however so Tibetan in its 174 character, that it cannot be supposed that this was their earliest intercourse with the trans-nivean races: whether they may have wandered from beyond the snows before the spread of Boodhism and its civilisation, or whether they are a cross between the Tamulian of India and the Tibetan, has not been decided. Their language, though [197] radically identical with Tibetan, differs from it in many 619 important particulars. They, or at least some of their 173 tribes, call themselves Rong, and Arratt, and their country Dijong: they once possessed a great part of East Nepal, as far west as the Tambur river, and at a still earlier period they penetrated as far west as the Arun river.

178 oldest homeland bears the name Damsang. We have here an inkling of the Tibetan Lama influence, which, as in Hindu tradition, links the original homeland with the holy district. Since the King-tzum-song-bu is very closely linked with the myths of the Lepchas we shall go more deeply into a study of it.

(a) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

773 The myths of the creation are of special importance.
776 "Create" in the Lepcha language is called "ayit" or "it" in its abbreviated form. Another word for create is "de-bo." "It-rum" or "de-rum" means "god of creation"; "Rum" by itself means "god." "Pum-thing-rum" signifies the same. "Pum bo" means "Principal," "Chief," "God." The name "It-bo" or "It-bo-mu" is again taken from the creative action of god. Other names are, "Ta-she-thing," "Sa-dzug-rum." The latter are connected with the sun god and are used by some as the emblem of the Supreme God.

The following is the myth about creation: In ancient times Rum created a great expanse of water. Nothing else existed at the time. Then he created on the bed of the water the fish "ngo." Next he formed three pairs of deities who lay down crosswise on the fish. The first of the pairs were Rug-lu and Rug-lom, and after them were Mon-li and Röng-gul, Pö-ril and Pö-dong. These are three pairs of male and female deities. Over these were fashioned Söm-li and Söm-nag-mön-mu, a couple who as man and wife are supposed to belong to the human race. They all carried the earth which rested on them in the form of a dish. The slightest movement of the fish resulted in earthquakes. Rum then created the great mountains of the earth, the chief of which is King-tzum-song-bu; then four more peaks, Pön-dām, Pön-tzum-dju, Pön-tzum-tang-rem-dju, Don-dong-tang-nyik-dju. Another story records that two chief mountains were created, *viz.*, the Kang-chen and the Kang-lo. Another Mun makes a contrary statement, "The snow-capped mountain Kang-chen-rum was created first and as a companion to it, Nyo-ling-rum, the goddess of the great ocean was created." In some versions of this story the goddess is named Lyang-ser-

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dong-bong, who is a mountain goddess in the plain. There exist many other variations about the sequence of creation. 773 776

Then Rum made the two rivers, Rong-nyo and Rong-nyit, to flow down from the mountains. They are male and female. In the middle of the female Rong-nyo, he created the rock, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, similar to the navel in the human body. A high mountain, regarded as the navel of the world is a well-known conception in Asia. The goddess, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, is supposed to live on this rock and childless parents pray to her to be blessed with children. The idea of male gods having their abode on the snow-capped mountains and the goddesses in the lakes, is fairly common among the Lepcha. These gods and goddesses are often linked with the first parents in Lepcha mythology.[25]

The sacrificial prayers of the Mun and the Bong thing are often preceded by a legend of creation. The text which we shall later render in detail begins thus :

"Fa dong dju fa dong dö gom shi gom yu rum ! 773
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (personal male and female 776
deities) and Gom shi, Gom yu rum (hunting gods). 539
Lyang it ung it lyang sog döm it
The earth was created, the water was created and the whole world was created.
Chi log so log it
Millet beer and husked rice were created
Lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Lyang wife, and Tög bu ta she's son (man) were created"[26]

Another part reads as follows :

"Ayan na ba lyang ung ma it ma den na ba.
In very ancient times when land and water were not yet created."

An old report has the words :

"Ta she nun rum ayit .....Ta she created the good spirits
Num shim nyo ayit .....He created man.
Lyang ayit .....He created the earth.
Ung ayit .....He created water
Gun pang ayit .....He created all things."[27]

25. Report of Gu-gu Bong thing at Git biyong.
26. Text of Gu-gu Bong thing.
27. Dictionary of the Lepcha language, op. cit., p. 121 b.

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773 Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living [774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the [771] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence. [772] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological [771] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 125/127. N. 4. p. 358.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 336, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

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(b) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF MAN

There are several myths current about the creation of man. Pum-thing created the first human beings. The first man was called Ti-gung-thik and his wife was called Ni-gung-ngal. They lived in Mayal-lyang, which lies on the other side of King-tzum-song-bu. There was then no disease, no suffering, no death. Now all human beings return to this place after their death.

In days of yore it was possible to reach this land from the earth. A hunter once came into the district of Mayal. When night overtook him, he prepared to put up for the night. Then he became aware of lights gleaming a little distance away. He approached the place, contacted the people and asked for shelter. They said to him, "What are you doing over here in Ren-dyong?"[34] He replied, "I hunt animals so I can provide myself with food." "Have you then nothing else to eat? Have you no grain to sustain yourself?" "No, I have none," replied the hunter. So they gave him gherkins, rice and millet and gave him instructions about the cultivation of these seeds after the re-migration of the birds after winter. Later on another hunter travelled to the spot and was stranded. He lit a fire and began to prepare his food. The inhabitants came there and were desirous of looking on at the proceedings. The hunter, however, looked upon them as intruders. He grew furious and struck them with a view of driving them away. They said to him, "In our land no one strikes another. We all live in peace and harmony. Take up your belongings and leave the place as quickly as you can, or our dogs will pounce upon you." The hunter looked around and perceived dogs that resembled bears and tigers. He grew terrified and fled away as fast as he could. Great storms followed in his wake; there were landslides and earthquakes; mountains came crashing down and all the entrances to the land were completely sealed over. Ever since this incident Mayal has remained inaccessible.[35]

Gorer gives the following description of Mayal, "The people of Mayal consists of seven brothers each with their own name

34. Dwelling place of the ancestors and now pronounced "den-dyong."
35. Report from Kalimpong.

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo- 775
Yook and Alau-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as [776
if it were human seed from a husband and the women are 777]
fertilised and fruitful.

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a- 773
ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37]

The Dān-si Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kafār-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-
chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the 773
god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had 776
no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-she-thing and Tōg-bu-thing then came into being. But

36. op. cit. p. 235 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ging near Maria-Basti.

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773 the real god of creation is It-bo. He has a wife by name of
[776] De-bo. (It-bo and De-bo mean "to produce" and "to create.") It-bo first created a man Ti-gung-thik. He then took a bone from the body of this man and out of it he created a wife for him. The place where the first human beings lived was called Da-lon-par-tan. (This is also the plain in which the tower intended to reach heaven was constructed.) The first couple lived there in perfect happiness and contentment until they became sinful. When they fell into sin the god Rum punished them by sending great floods which continued unabated for fifteen days so that all the people were drowned. Only one Lepcha couple were able to save themselves in a wooden ship.

Stocks narrates the following myth of creation : "In the beginning there was only sea, and the creator Tashey-takbo-
[772] thing made two kinds of fish,—ngo, was the common kind, while the ngo-yang had a serpent form. From the sea we believe that a tortoise supports the world, and on it Tashey-takbo-thing created birds and animals.

Then he tried to make a form of man from butter, but it would not stand up, as whenever he made it, it melted. (Had the butter only remained firm, he should all have been very beautiful). Then he made a human form of earth and mud, and wind came into this resemblance of man and life was created. Then Tashey-takbo-thing made blood out of the water which he put in it and the bones he created from stone. Then he moved away to see whether the creature he had made could answer him and speak, but as he had no nerves or veins he was unable to do so. So Tashey-takbo-thing picked a great many creepers from the jungle and from those which he spread all over the form, it spoke.

Thus was the first male created, but as there was no female he was lonely, and could not reproduce himself. One day as he was catching birds with his snare in the jungle, Tashey-takbo-thing entangled a woman in one for him to catch. So the man caught her and brought her to his home ; but at first they could not marry as there was no go between to help them to talk over the matter. But at last the Rum decided to send the owl (tam-bum) down the country of creation,

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It-lyang."[38] This myth is interesting because it relates, in the first place, the two efforts made by God to create man, and secondly because it relates how God brought the woman into the life of the man, by placing her in some mysterious way in the snare set by man to catch birds. 773

According to another myth the genealogy of mankind is even more complicated. Among the various creatures that were created as It-mo's children, there is also Takbo-thing, who hitherto had been designated as the god of creation. Ta-she is added to the name with whom we shall become more closely acquainted later on. "The last two to be born were Takbo-thing and Nazong-ngyu, and although these were brother and sister, they became husband and wife and had many children."[39] These children however were evil spirits and demons. They were not nourished by their mother, but were disowned and driven away. They live not on the earth but outside the earth. The reason why monsters were born out of this wedlock was surely due to the forbidden and irregular marriage between brother and sister. Rum then separated them. After the separation a human being was born. The mother loved this child deeply and fed it at her breast. When the other children perceived this they grew very jealous, hated the child intensely and so it died. The grief-stricken mother sent two birds up to Tak-bo-thing in order to fetch from him the Water of Life and the Water of Death. Tak-bo-thing gave them both the waters and instructed them about the use of the waters. On their return flight the birds decided not to use the directions as they had been given to them but to reverse them. And so it happens that men die and are always born again. Rum stands as a symbol to man. The Mung demons, on the contrary, do not die, and a priest-magician, Bong-thing, was sent to keep them under control. Only then was it possible for man to live on the earth. He is called Tar-bong-mu. As he was catching birds one day he found a fairy, the daughter of the Lha-ma-yin.[40] He forcibly took this beautiful Na-rib-nom as his wife. To avoid the misfortune consequent [585]

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38. op. cit. p. 355 sq.
39. op. cit. p. 346.
40. Tibetan name for Titans.

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776 to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage
[585] ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment
[373] play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 354.

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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth 773
he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made 776
his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nazong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each [782
year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal 241]
most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in 776
Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-köb, and the daughter, Bi-köb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-köb and Bi-köb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices [792
performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni- [773
gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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776 consequence they had to labour in order to procure their
[773] livelihood. These first human beings are the parents of the Rong (Lepcha), the Brug-pa (Bhutanese) and the Jimdar (Nepalese). The very first man, the progenitor of the race, is Ti-gung-pum." So far the statement of Sa-liang. And so we have different traditions that tell the story of the first human beings. Often entire genealogies of gods and spirits are quoted.[43] Finally, the immediate ancestors of mankind make their appearance. The presence of evil in the world is sometimes attributed to them, for, being brother and sister, they live as man and wife, without the proper performance of the marriage ceremonies. Other myths offer other solutions for the problem of evil in the world.

(c) Myths of the Deluge

773 "In the beginning all men were good. Gradually they grew perverse. This annoyed Rum to such an extent that he sent a great deluge to destroy them all. Only one high mountain peak remained above the water. This was originally called Dōng-grung, a ladder which links earth with heaven. The mountain is now called Dān-dong. In order to appease god and make the flood abate, the people sacrificed chi, millet beer, through the bird 'ko-hon,' (partridge). As the bird sprayed the chi in sacrifice to heaven some of it fell on its breast. This fact is supposed to explain why even today, the bird's breast is bitter to the taste. The sacrifice was pleasing to god and the flood abated."

We have still another version of this tradition, "Rong-nyo, the female river, and Rong-nyit, the male, were deliberating with each other as to how they could meet and unite on the plain at the outskirts of the jungle. In the Lepcha language this place is called Pa-sog. Rong-nyo chose as her guide through the mountains a snake which glided straight to their destination. Rong-nyit chose the partridge as his guide. The bird flew hither and thither and took a confusing route across the mountain, thus causing Rong-nyit to arrive late at the rendezvous. He was very angry when he discovered that Rong-nyo had already arrived. Furiously he shouted, 'I

43. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. 345 sq.

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am going back!' As he flowed backward the waters rose 773
higher and higher and soon covered the mountains. All mankind was drowned. Only one couple were able to save themselves on the high peak, Dān-dong. When this happened Rong-nyo said to the priest, 'Offer a sacrifice to Rong-nyit. Appease him so that he may turn back and the floods subside.' The priest did as he was told, and when the sacrifice had been offered the floods abated. Then Rong-nyo said, 'I am a woman. I shall, therefore, be obedient and live at a lower level than man, who shall henceforth flow over me.' And so when the two rivers did eventually meet, Rong-nyit streamed over Rong-nyo, who flows beneath it."[44]

This myth makes it abundantly clear that the quarrel between the man and the woman was the real cause of the flood. Instead of the bird acting as the intermediary, the priest performs the conciliatory sacrifice. Another version of this myth identifies the partridge with the woman, "In the beginning Fooroong and Nazong-nyo lived, our first grandfather and mother, the ancestors on the earth. The flood came on and nearly every human creature perished, only two who ran to the summit of Mount Tendong-lho were saved. Now Takbo-thing was the father of Tashey-thing, who had married the partridge (ko-hon-fo) and she put some chi in a large leaf (tung-fyum-nyom) which she offered to her father-in-law saying that if he only would, he could stop the flood. And Takbo-thing looking down from the country of the Rum, saw that the world was flooded, and that his daughter-in-law was praying to him, and offering him 'chi.' He took up his walking stick (pa tung) and struck the world so that the water sank in. But the partridge split some of the 'chi' on her breast. (The mark can be seen to this day, and because of this the partridge is called tung-fyum). So the world became dry once more, and the trees and the bushes commenced to grow once again and the world was re-peopled."[45] In this myth the relationship between Tashey-thing and Takbo-thing is again altered. This is another instance of the manifold variations prevalent among Lepcha legends.

44. Kalimpong tradition.
45. Stocks, op. cit. p. 389; cfr. the genealogy of God and his family p. 60.

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T73 [T76] In another legend the serpent king is connected with the flood : "....And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female and it is from these two that the human beings have spread over the entire world..... When these two were made, birth so multiplied that there was not enough room in the world. Then Parli-bu, who was the serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky. Everyone fled to the top of Kong-chen-chu, the highest peak in the Himalayas, but only two people were saved. The place where they stood is called Mayak-kyong to this day. While the flood was raging, Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world named Yongli-pono, to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent to pieces thus making the waters run down into the plains and we, the Rong folk, still believe that the Blue Mountains (that can be seen from the valley of Rangpo-chu) are the remains of the cut body of the serpent. When the world was dry once again, Tashey-thing sent down two rivers from the Himalaya mountains guided by another serpent called king Paril-patong and a quail, the Ko-hun-fo, and these were Rung-nyo (Tista) and Rung-nyit.

He also sent Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu down into the world from the height of Mayal-kyong, giving them the name Tikung-tek and Nikong-gnal. These are the first 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' of the Rong folk. As they had no king, Tashey-thing sent down Gyabo-chaya-dor-tulku from Mayal-kyong and he is the 'grandfather' (ancestor) of the present Maharaja."[46] This legend links the first parents with the flood and the re-peopling of the earth. The name of the first king who is sent by the High God is quite Tibetan and points to Tibetan motifs, according to which, the first king came from heaven.

Mainwaring, the great collector of cultural treasures of the Lepchas, cites the following myth, "It may be noted that the Lepchas have legends in common with divers other primitive races,....regarding the flood and the tower of Babel. The legends were without doubt, brought with them

46. op. cit. 388 sq.

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from beyond the snows, but they have connected the incidents with their present place of residence. There is a hill visible from Darjeeling, which, as the tale hath it, when all the country was under water, arose and supported a ship containing a few persons, all other people being drowned. The hill rose up like a horn, (hence the name a-róng, a horn,) and afterwards subsided to its present form. It is known to the Europeans as the Camel's back. On the top of the lofty Sung-lilho, it is said, a foolish class of Lepchas—(the na-óng) now extinct,—endeavoured to raise a building high enough to reach the heavens. Rock and blocks of stone, as the ruins, are shown on the place."[47] We ourselves heard this saga of the tower and its ruins, in Darjeeling. In Git-biyong, we heard the following version of this saga, "The Lepchas filled a great many pitchers with earth, and piled them higher and higher over each other in an effort to reach the heavens. The man on the top reached so high that with the aid of a long hook he fancied he could link earth with heaven. Whereupon he shouted to the people beneath him, 'Quick! Pass a hook on to me.' It must be noted that in the Lepcha language the word for 'hook' and for 'cut off' have an identical pronunciation. The people yelled, 'Why cut off?' From above sounded the urgent answer, 'Quick, the hook.' They understood it to be, 'Quick, cut off!' So they cut off the rope and their tower came crumbling to the ground."

Here is another version of the story, "When (after the flood) the world was full of people once more, a tribe called the Na-ong, or 'Ignorant persons' prepared to ascend to the Rum country, and they began to build a tower of earthen pots. They piled them so high that the Rum country was only one pole away. The creator thought they were becoming too eager and too zealous, and that it was not good for them.

So he thought he would create confusion, and make them all speak in different tongues, so that they would misunderstand one another. The man at the top shouted, 'Kok vim yang tale' (hand up the pole with the hook,) while the men at the bottom heard the words, 'Chek tala' (cut it

47. G. B. Mainwaring, A grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) Language, Calcutta, 1876, p. XX.

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773 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man
173 at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 The myth describing the building of the tower demons-
772 trates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 259 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 236 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 237.

776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

776 The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who instructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize; sama, a kind of white millet; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing. [821] [753]

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly
[278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[58]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

58. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. 782 Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, 776 however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim 773 that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner :

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyö. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[62] The world of the

62. "Fiang it dyö it
Chi's genesis, Dyö's intoxication genesis ! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked [539] on as female ; dyö is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different than millet, and is looked on as a male).

hung tän o ba nang plö — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plö
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

Sang log pair of trees originated ! (Several holy trees are known. Na-eö and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sö-brio. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altag, The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

sag döm tam ga — son sa dän dog ga rum fig rum plö
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing sa a dyän rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tän
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing hob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tän plö
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — uug it — yang ming yang song !
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

782 demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving
776 and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the
[773] tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grand-
children, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act.
Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner
[688] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart.
But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears,
gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of
good things. If we do not know how to act in the right
manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be
angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased
always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God,
the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god,
Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures,
perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the
rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of
abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[539] 62a. to pong sa lung tän rong köb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
döm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön ga tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin köb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top cho. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la söm d,u chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la süm kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog döm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dö do nier nyu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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782 796 224 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit [784] over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[84]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god 773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

84. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

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Koeng was one of the beetle rope holders, for it was the time of the year when he lives and sings for three months; the bak-dyol was another beetle who also comes out at this time, whilst the dyang-dyang (another beetle) was also alive, so he came too. So did Neprik-nyom, the grass-hopper and lots of other insects—all helped Tashey-thing who started climbing down the rope. 773

But almost immediately Mon-tsu-mot cut it, and all the animals and insects became so frightened that they ran away at once. Tashey-thing saved himself by holding on to the rock with one of the hairs from his moustache, and we Rong folk believe to this day that leaves from the bush we find hanging down from fry rocks, which has a grey colour like the tint of the thatching grass, and which is soft like hair, originates from the one hair that saved his life. He was wondering how he would release himself from his peril when a monkey happened to pass, who asked him what he was doing.

Tashey-thing told him he had come down to take some honey from the rock, but his wife, Mon-tsu-mot, with some animals and insects who had promised to help him, had played a nasty trick and cut the rope they had been holding.

So the monkey took him off the rock, and putting him on his back, told him he was to keep his eyes closed until he knew by the sound that he, the monkey, was walking; he was on no account to open them especially when they were rustling through the leaves.

Now when Tashey-thing was put down in a safe place, he told the monkey for a reward he would give him gold, silver or anything he asked for. But the monkey did not want gold or silver. 'Give me,' he said, 'a blessing instead, that will help me to have the first fruits of every field in harvest time.'

And Tashey-thing gave him the blessing.

But he cursed the rock bees, saying much trouble had come to him through them, and that it would be no sin for the Rong folk to take their honey away in future.

Then Tashey-thing planted a species of bamboo (the bling) and when it had grown big enough he made a bow from it, then he planted another bamboo (the pa-song) from which he made an arrow. Then for three years he followed

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the footprint of Mon-tsu-mot, and passing through nine countries and crossing nine ranges of mountains, he found the wild boar at last sleeping in a lair she had made from dry leaves. Then he aimed with his arrow and killing her, he collected firewood and commenced to burn her. Whilst he was roasting her, some hot fat fell from her body, and a drop falling on his thumb made him lick it off.

Then he cursed all wild boars, saying it would be no sin henceforth if the Rong folk were to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day, we can eat the flesh of the wild boar, which we never did formerly when she was Tashey-thing's wife. It was also then that the bow and arrow were invented.

Then being a widower, Tashey-thing married Gnyul-chul who was a fish, and said once as they came to a river he would carry her across on his back. Gnyul-chul did not like the idea and told Tashey-thing he ought to make a bridge. He made a bamboo one and just as they were nearly across, knowing she would annoy him, Gnyul-chul tumbled off his back and dropped in.

Then Tashey-thing became angry, and running downstream he placed a bamboo fishing net (a yet) in the middle of the river. Catching her on the third day, he found that the arms and legs of Gnyul-chul had become fins, whilst the rest of her body was still that of a woman.

The moment Tashey-thing had caught her he made a fire and burnt her. Some fat fell from her body, and dropped on his thumb which he licked off, and he cursed fish saying that from that day it would be no sin for a human being to kill and eat them. So we, the Rong folk, believe from that day we can catch and eat fish, which we did not do when a fish was the wife of Tashey-thing.

So he was once more a widower, and he blessed us the Rong folk and said we should be as abundant as the bushes and trees in the jungle, and that until the monkey died out there, we should not die out.

After blessing us, Tashey-thing returned once more to the country of the Rum (heaven).'[65]

[65] Stocks, op. cit. p. 361 sq.

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the
ptso was going through the forest when he came on what he
thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of
hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his
incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate
part of it; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said,
'You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your
children must serve me and worship me and make offerings
to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat
all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason
why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[88] From these
legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing,
gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food
and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game,
and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the moun-
tains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are
looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following
story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who
hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this
theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [538]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly
I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull
was asleep; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified
me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as
if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting
god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds.
The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing
drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We with-
drew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

88. Gorer, op. cit. p. 86.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice. [515]

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the Myths and the Ritual of the Rong

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the 273
sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of 796
millet. The second is Dyö, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dön-dyö-chi-log, who [776]
is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is 773
of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset 273
the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was 796
brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 346.

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273 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment
796 back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they
273 did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious
273 effects ; for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 353.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796
estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [171]
Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796
to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782
his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773
ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 188 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[773] the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 256.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 176.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance. 273 171

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple. 773

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon 773 171

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 160.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 253.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 and cut it to pieces. Then he cleared the path for the waters
171 so that they could flow freely into the sea.[96]

Indra-Vrtra corresponds to the Iranian Tishtar-Apaosha. After the fight between them both had raged with unabated fury for three days, he appeared weary and about to give in. Whereupon he cried, "If men would perform sacrifices, I still could win." They therefore offered the Haoma sacrifice because of which the hero gained strength and conquered the demon. Indra had also obtained superb strength through the drinking of Soma. In the Rong myths the stimulant Chi had to be offered to God in order that he might be passified and let the floods abate. As the serpent is again linked in another way with the flood, the snake king as leader of the river Rung-nyo and the subsequent flood;—we do not believe that the Rong have, in this case, taken over Vedic Hindu myths, but have handed down, independently, their own legends, which are very slightly influenced by modern Hinduism.

The second motif is the saving of a pair or of a few people, who either saved themselves by taking refuge on a mountain-top or in a vessel. We have acquainted ourselves earlier with the Rong legend (page 40 sq.). In Atharvaveda (19·39·8) this event is recorded as having occurred in the Himalayas, "There was the arrival of the vessel ; there was the peak of the Himalayas ; there was immortality in sight ; there grows the Kushta grass." Shatapatha Brahmana (1·8·1/10) describes how Manu was saved in a ship. According to the Vendidad of the Iranians, Jamshed (Yima) was locked up in a "vara" by Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme God, in order that he might be saved from the great flood.

As the myths of the flood occur among so many Asiatic peoples (in the Near, Middle and Far East) there is no conclusive parallel about the saving of mankind as described in the myths of the Rong and Indo-Iranians. These legends could be drawn from several sources.

782 In the cult of the Rong, the sacrificing of bulls plays an outstanding part. For both, the living (during illness) and for the dead (in funeral ceremonies), the bulls must lose their

96. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 133 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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441 Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife [142] is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

224 That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part [174] of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock [123] of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

241 773 Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 60 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[113]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

113. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

re made in every size, from the smallest to be held and turned n the hand, to enormous ones several times bigger than a man, all tuffed with repetitions of the *mantra*; every turn of these wheels s an acquisition of merit and a remission of sin. It is not even ecessary that the pray-er should go to the effort of turning these vheels; wheels driven by mechanical power are just as efficient. Tafoor has four water-turned prayer-wheels set over a small stream y his house. The next most conspicuous method of automatic raying is the prayer-flag; this consists of a piece of cloth stamped vith various *mantra* and attached to a pole; each time the wind nakes the cloth flutter it is as if the prayer were uttered. There re a variety of these flags, some being for the benefit of the dead nd others for that of the living. Finally the inscription of a *nantra* on stone (either in Tibetan or preferably Lenza characters) nd set into a monument or building, acts as though this inscribed rayer was being said continuously.

The metaphysical beliefs of the lamas concerning the soul are arious and self-contradictory. The soul of man can die, but the oul is immortal. The soul can be devoured by demons or destroyed y sorcery and will nevertheless be reincarnated. With the exception of the earth itself and certain mountains, which are the homes f supernaturals, everything possesses a soul; but the souls of ocks and plants are very weak and only survive as long as their wner survives. With plants every seed, as soon as it is formed, ossesses a potential soul of its own, as does a cutting, as soon as it s separated from the parent plant and stuck in the ground. It is a neritorious act to increase vegetable souls but no punishable sin is ommitted by destroying them.

The souls of animals (with the exception of leeches and mosquioes, which are believed to be emanations of devils and soul-less) re far more important; it is a major sin to destroy an animal for t is possible that its soul may be that of an ex-human being; and ious people will erect prayer-flags for animals killed through ccident or in the normal course of human life. Partly by divinaion, and partly by the observation of footprints near the place where he body was disposed of, it is possible to tell if the soul of a recently lead relative has been reincarnated as an animal; if this does occur t is said that the near relations should abstain from eating this pecies of animal. I never came across nor heard of such an instance f ritual prohibition, for dead people are never discovered to have nigrated into any animal which was fit to eat.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 779 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a [751] snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[6] [828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[6] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 5

Lamaism: Monks and Nuns

TO the ignorant Lepcha the world is peopled by 776
spirits; evil spirits known as *Mung*, and good spirits known as *Rum*, or gods. It is difficult sometimes to decide whether a particular spirit is devil or god; for while a Mung is always evil, a Rum, if angered, will appear in a malicious guise and may then be referred to as a demon. Every happening in the material world is due to the influence of spirits. Devils cause sickness, bad harvests, and every other kind of misfortune: but provided they are appeased by means of the correct sacrifices their evil can be averted, and on occasions they may even be induced to further some particular project, such as causing the death of an enemy, or winning the heart of some apparently stony-hearted woman. Some earlier writers have described the Lepchas as animists, but I believe this idea to be mistaken. Animism implies the attribution of a living soul to inanimate 774
objects and natural phenomena; but the Lepcha has not this belief. According to his ideas, trees, rivers, rocks and other natural objects are only the homes of spirits; but as such they must be treated with proper respect. The objects themselves, however, while they are sometimes thought to possess a separate soul, do not need to be propitiated. When a house, 774
for instance, is being built, a sacrifice will be made when the 782
trees are felled from which it is to be constructed. This sacrifice, however, is offered not to the spirits considered to be inherent in the trees themselves, but to compensate for any annoyance which might be caused to spirits living in them, and also as a general expiation for the sin of taking life; for trees, being living things, are thought to have separate souls of their own. This last is only a minor

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[536] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843
father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826
the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774]
full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and
for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844
and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event. It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

ANCIENT FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE LEPCHAS

R. NEBESKY DE WOJKOWITZ

177 The teachings and rites of the Unreformed School of Tibetan Buddhism—nowadays the dominant creed in the Sikkim State—have deeply influenced the beliefs and religious practices of the Lepchas, the main group of aboriginal inhabitants in the Sikkim area. In the course of four centuries, which passed since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism into Sikkim,[1] the original Lepcha traditions became so closely intermingled with ideas and customs of Tibetan origin,[2] that it is now a most difficult task to separate these two groups from each other ; this state is still more complicated by the fact that the Lepchas accepted—even if only in a smaller degree—also some of the traditions and customs of the neighbouring Mangars, Limbus,[3] Nepalese and Bhutanese. Among many other customs also ideas concerning the human soul, death and its causes, life after death, etc., as well as the funeral ceremonies themselves were greatly changed under Tibetan influence. Thus the belief in a judgement of the soul by the Lord of the Dead, *Cho ge pă no*[4] (Tb. *Chhos kyi rgyal po*), the migration of the soul through the perils of the *Bar do*[5] (Tb. *Bar do*)—the stage between death and new life—and its rebirth in one of the "six worlds", the punishment of sinners in hell or *Nyó lyang* (Tb. *dMyal ba*), and other well known theories of Tibetan Buddhism are therefore today [764] widely spread among the Lepchas. Oral tradition, however, preserved accounts of the early Lepcha customs and in some of the remote, scarcely accessible valleys of Sikkim the old funeral rites are said to be still observed.

774 According to the old Lepcha belief,[6] the soul[7] is given to a human being by *Fă gróng thing* and his wife *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the 775 Lepcha race,[8] at the moment of birth. *Nă zóng nyo*, who is also responsible for the conception, determines of which sex the child is going to be. The place from which the soul comes and to which it again returns after a man's death, is called *Rŭm lyang*, "the place of gods". It is believed, that this place lies somewhere in the hills, close to Mount Kanchenjunga.[9] The soul, once it has returned to the *Rŭm lyang*, will stay there with the spirits of the ancestors and not reincarnate in this world again. It also will not have to undergo any punishment for the sins, which the deceased might have committed during his lifetime.

At the time of birth, the soul is believed to be very small, but later on it becomes gradually bigger, keeping pace with the growth of the body. The soul of a living being is called *A pil* and it

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[764] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mŭ zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sōn-lyang, originally called Sōm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [184] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Saocha, op. cit. p. 237.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [688] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mäg-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

765 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of
782 another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa
776 dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation).
The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created. Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation, so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods
● [774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods; dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gom shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar agag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö nöng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

mung gung man la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

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755
782
776
[774]

and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness ; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot(bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[539]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung ghum rum pong sug ngag la bam
to the water and the flood goods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.

dö dö dzam hi dzam nyong rum pong khing tzung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,

ayek alat rum pong dzö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,

ong bon pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life ; if I know how to sacrifice, so

sug yu gong nön dö dö khing tzung go nöng sug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it ; if I do not

nön dö dö a yö a riom plö cho djü la sag yö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know

gong la rum göm
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.

djö la sag ma yö nöng gong na mung göm
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.

dö dö sag la ma yöng gong na mung ai gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.

a lem sag döm ga ayek alat plö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here !

nyö ting sa rum göm go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,

ati nöno nong ga su gad shö bu sa yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.

dö ting ga ning long fat sa yuk gum
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.

go yu nen nin nog döm ga chi lag so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

766 to be described later are more for a protection for the living than as a help for the dead. Only if a young child were to die away from its home would the ceremony of Dek Flee[1] be held to keep away its haunting demon.

775 764 It is at death and the ceremonies which surround death that the beliefs and ritual of the Mun and lamas most obviously clash and contradict one another. Both creeds hold that the soul outside the body is lost in some dangerous region through which it must be conducted; and therefore representatives of both creeds help to conduct the soul away. But the soul's destination on these wanderings is completely different; for the lama the soul wanders for forty-nine days in a sort of purgatory, after which it is judged and rewarded and sent on to its next incarnation, whether it be on the earth as another human being or as an animal or to heaven for a period of blessedness or to hell for a period of torment. For the Mun the soul is conducted to the *rumlyang*, where it is born again as a tiny child, very often of a different sex to its former life; in the *rumlyang* the child grows up to maturity and leads a happy and immortal life among all the other dead, a life similar to that here on earth except that there is no death or disease or want.

The implicit contradictions in these beliefs are realised in the case of lamas and nuns, for whom the Mun perform no ceremonies; the souls of lamas and nuns are not led to the *rumlyang* but conducted through the *bardo* or purgatory. But for laymen ceremonies of both religions are held simultaneously; the lamas perform inside the house while the Mun does his ceremonies outside.

764 There are three alternative methods of disposing of a corpse; it may be burnt, buried, or thrown into the river. Which method 766 is adopted depends partly on the condition of the deceased and partly on the lama's horoscopes. The lamas and nuns are never buried; they are almost always burnt unless they die in the wet season, in which case their bodies are thrown into the river. Laymen are never burnt; whether they are buried or thrown into the river depends on the lama's horoscope; the greater number are buried. Young children should always be thrown into the river, but occasionally an exception is made; thus Patek's mother when she lost in rapid succession four children in infancy burnt the body of the last one in anger and as a protest at the way the supernaturals were treating her; but such behaviour is extremely uncommon.

764 As soon as a person dies the position in which he has expired

[1] Vide sub, p. 352–353.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 When the ceremony is finished the clothes of the deceased are divided among the lamas; the Dorjé Lapoon gets the best coat and the *omzets* the other garments. Before these are worn the lama will hold some mustard seeds in his hand and pray silently; he will then throw the seeds on the clothes; this is considered sufficient disinfection; after that the garment is washed and can then be worn or sold. In the case of a dead lama his skull-drum and bell goes to the Dorjé Lapoon and his rosary to the officiating *kané*; the *kané* also gets the *patyoot* with the rupee and grain inside, the dead man's plate and cup, and the big scarf which covered the face of the image. At a lama's *sanglion* the nuns are given a rupee a head and a maund of grain between them, and the lamas are given Rs. 20 and three maunds of grain to divide. For a layman's *sanglion* the gifts are usually considerably less.

The day after the *sanglion* is finished the place where the body was disposed of is visited by some near relations of the deceased to see if there are any footprints in the near neighbourhood which would indicate that the dead man had reincarnated as an animal. The footprints of cats, dogs and tigers do not indicate reincarnation; they merely show that a devil has passed by in this form, and I never heard any actual incident of the prints of any other animal being discovered.

If everything consumed in this *sanglion* were paid for in cash it would represent an expense of over Rs. 200, for a continuous feast with meat has to be provided for all present. If the survivors are poor everybody will bring contributions of money and food. The ceremony is absolutely necessary to free the soul of the dead man [775] from devils and lead it to heaven. Were it omitted the soul would wander miserably on earth, doing harm to the survivors, and eventually reincarnating as a worm or some noisome insect or beast of prey.

Money should be distributed to the monasteries in the name of the dead man; if he was a poor man it need only be given to the three monasteries of Zongu, but if he was rich to the monasteries all over Sikkim.

It is considered desirable that the Mun *sanglion* should take place on the same day as the disposal of the corpse. If, however, the lamas' *sanglion* is postponed that of the Mun may be also. Very few Mun know how to perform the death ceremony; in Lingthem the only one who knew how to was old Pumri and she was never employed as it was not considered suitable for a woman to perform

531 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
874 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery
792 has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's
622 leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about
775 the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun,
[766] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE TRIMMINGS

778 The following list reads something like a recipe in a
775 cookery book. Its understanding, however, is not essential; and anyone who finds such things as "Mrs. Beeton" dull may skip this paragraph and proceed direct to the story.

Having completed the figure of the Go-sum, take the following:

Lukor Chu-Ni; twelve. These are small *torma*, about two inches in height, pressed out flat and stamped with a design in flour. They represent the separate years of the Tibetan twelve-year cycle.

Tako; four. These are miniature cups of dough. They are filled with *chi*, after which bits of raw meat are added.

Chumi; one. A *chumi* is the ordinary Lepcha word for a lamp. This miniature one is made of dough, as is its wick. It cannot therefore be lighted.

Gyachen Diji; four of these are required. These are small *torma* with spreading bases, and represent the gods of the four directions. One is placed at each corner of the figure.

Par Chongo: one. This is a long strip of dough, rather like a thin and elongated sausage. It has a design pressed upon it in flour and represents the animals, birds, and insects that live entirely on dry land.

Sa Julgu: one. This is similar to the *Par Chongo* but rather shorter in length. It represents snakes, fish, toads and all other such creatures as live in water or under rocks.

Chongbu Tip-gyu: to taste. These are small twists of dough and look like cigars that have been ill treated. They are used for waving over people. Four or five is the usual number.

Diget: twelve. These are small ordinary *tormas* and represent the demons and gods who live in the human world.

Gyukar Nger-get: fourteen. These are double *tormas*, joined together in pairs. They represent old men and women, and are the servants of the Go-sum. The sexes are not distinguished.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

ANCIENT FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE LEPCHAS

R. NEBESKY DE WOJKOWITZ

177 The teachings and rites of the Unreformed School of Tibetan Buddhism—nowadays the dominant creed in the Sikkim State—have deeply influenced the beliefs and religious practices of the Lepchas, the main group of aboriginal inhabitants in the Sikkim area. In the course of four centuries, which passed since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism into Sikkim,[1] the original Lepcha traditions became so closely intermingled with ideas and customs of Tibetan origin,[2] that it is now a most difficult task to separate these two groups from each other ; this state is still more complicated by the fact that the Lepchas accepted—even if only in a smaller degree—also some of the traditions and customs of the neighbouring Mangars, Limbus,[3] Nepalese and Bhutanese. Among many other customs also ideas concerning the human soul, death and its causes, life after death, etc., as well as the funeral ceremonies themselves were greatly changed under Tibetan influence. Thus the belief in a judgement of the soul by the Lord of the Dead, *Cho ge pă no*[4] (Tb. *Chhos kyi rgyal po*), the migration of the soul through the perils of the *Bar do*[5] (Tb. *Bar do*)—the stage between death and new life—and its rebirth in one of the "six worlds", the punishment of sinners in hell or *Nyó lyang* (Tb. *dMyal ba*), and other well known theories of Tibetan Buddhism are therefore today [764] widely spread among the Lepchas. Oral tradition, however, preserved accounts of the early Lepcha customs and in some of the remote, scarcely accessible valleys of Sikkim the old funeral rites are said to be still observed.

774 According to the old Lepcha belief,[6] the soul[7] is given to a human being by *Fă gróng thíng* and his wife *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the 775 Lepcha race,[8] at the moment of birth. *Nă zóng nyo*, who is also responsible for the conception, determines of which sex the child is going to be. The place from which the soul comes and to which it again returns after a man's death, is called *Rŭm lyang*, "the place of gods". It is believed, that this place lies somewhere in the hills, close to Mount Kanchenjunga.[9] The soul, once it has returned to the *Rŭm lyang*, will stay there with the spirits of the ancestors and not reincarnate in this world again. It also will not have to undergo any punishment for the sins, which the deceased might have committed during his lifetime.

At the time of birth, the soul is believed to be very small, but later on it becomes gradually bigger, keeping pace with the growth of the body. The soul of a living being is called *A pil* and it

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
●775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away.

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death.

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol kung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one.

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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776 to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo sŏ rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

775 At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a 764 *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

[764] When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water ; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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764 loose sling to the little finger of the *Mŭn's* left hand. In her right hand she took a knife, as weapon against evil spirits.

764 After these preparations had been finished, the *Mŭn* works herself gradually into a slight trance, and with a high, loud voice she begins
775 her incantations. She calls upon the *Mŭk nyam* to recognize, that he belongs from now on to the world of the dead, and that he should not hide in trees, stones, rivers, lakes or fire, but he should join the soul of the *Mŭn* for a tour of the Lepcha land. The *Mŭn* sings now for hours a long, rhymed account, the text of which she had learned by heart from her teacher during the time of initiation. She describes to the spirit the beauty of Sikkim, its snow mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes, the forests, fields and lonely dwellings of men. At last, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit down the Teesta River and describing the source of this greatest river of Sikkim, she conducts the *Mŭk nyam* across the Indian plains, "to show it the ocean". But she admonishes the deceased, that he should not gaze too long at the endless sea, as he has to return with her that very night to the Lepcha land. Then again the *Mŭk nyam* is led to the Teesta and following the river upstream, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit back to the house, from which they started the journey.[15]

764 In the early morning, when the darkness of the night begins to fade into the grey of the approaching day, the ceremony reaches its
775 climax. At this time all the relatives of the deceased, who are present
787 in the house, assemble in front of the *Mŭn*. The dresses, jewellery and other personal belongings of the dead person, as well as numerous dishes with various foods are placed near the *Mŭn*, who finishes now her incantations and falls into a full trance. Her eyes close, the face becomes ash-gray and mask-like. Suddenly, tears begin to flow from her eyes and the whole body begins to tremble. This is supposed to be the moment at which the spirit of the deceased enters the body of the *Mŭn*, and using the sorceress as a medium, the *Mŭk nyam* begins to speak through her mouth. He tells now to his relatives the cause of his death and expresses his last wishes, while members of the family in their turn frequently ask the deceased, whether he left perhaps any business unsettled in his lifetime, where some of his possessions, which could not be found are hidden, etc. Many of the older Lepchas who witnessed several times the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, unanimously state that frequently most surprising occurrences take place during this ceremony. It often happens that somebody dies without having disclosed, where he had hidden his money or jewels, and the relatives were searching in vain for these things. If however this question is put to the *Mŭn* in his trance, she usually answers it without hesitation

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the 823 spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral 766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and [756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pă ting*),[18] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭh nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
796 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
776 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
778 The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the
778 Bön religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour
of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it
775 may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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(b) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF MAN

There are several myths current about the creation of 773
man. Pum-thing created the first human beings. The first man was called Ti-gung-thik and his wife was called Ni-gung-ngal. They lived in Mayal-lyang, which lies on the other side of King-tzum-song-bu. There was then no disease, no suffering, no death. Now all human beings return to this [775]
place after their death.

In days of yore it was possible to reach this land from the earth. A hunter once came into the district of Mayal. When night overtook him, he prepared to put up for the night. Then he became aware of lights gleaming a little distance away. He approached the place, contacted the people and asked for shelter. They said to him, "What are you doing over here in Ren-dyong?"[34] He replied, "I hunt animals so I can provide myself with food." "Have you then nothing else to eat? Have you no grain to sustain yourself?" "No, I have none," replied the hunter. So they gave him gherkins, rice and millet and gave him instructions about the cultivation of these seeds after the re-migration of the birds after winter. Later on another hunter travelled to the spot and was stranded. He lit a fire and began to prepare his food. The inhabitants came there and were desirous of looking on at the proceedings. The hunter, however, looked upon them as intruders. He grew furious and struck them with a view of driving them away. They said to him, "In our land no one strikes another. We all live in peace and harmony. Take up your belongings and leave the place as quickly as you can, or our dogs will pounce upon you." The hunter looked around and perceived dogs that resembled bears and tigers. He grew terrified and fled away as fast as he could. Great storms followed in his wake; there were landslides and earthquakes; mountains came crashing down and all the entrances to the land were completely sealed over. Ever since this incident Mayal has remained inaccessible.[35]

Gorer gives the following description of Mayal, "The people 775
of Mayal consists of seven brothers each with their own name

34. Dwelling place of the ancestors and now pronounced "den-dyong."
35. Report from Kalimpong.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164 787] goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 772] sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as if it were human seed from a husband and the women are fertilised and fruitful. 775 [776 777]

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a-ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37] 773

The Dān-ai Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kaftr-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-she-thing and Tōg-bu-thing then came into being. But 773 776

36. op. cit. p. 235 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ging near Maria-Basti.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(*c*) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sön-lyang, originally called Söm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [184] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of [775 her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782 I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797 Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535 and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

 T

Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was 764
kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse 789
was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, 782
four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'. L

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in 771
many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as 764
Pōn. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim 782
says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pōn-pōn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pōn* for three days and nights.'

L

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after 775
death through subterranean passages to the local deities of 823
Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages. L

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in 771
Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Nga*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

356 much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

•776 Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* [787] lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go [782] away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

346 In some houses however it is divined that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and 346 is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's 782 house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with rice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *chi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to the inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new house would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if the old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* would accompany them, spending most of his time with them, but occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last point is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens that Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently unlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and if it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, the survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem had had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabitants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were actually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors preferred to live with relations rather than cope with the work alone.

V

In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; it is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables and roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are only grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of the field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring wheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This garden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal manure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals shelter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. At the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, cultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable material. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit trees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and occasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their flowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the surrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land near their house. All possess some strips of land—often more than a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes of the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of wet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 The big fields, which are cleared by burning once every eight years, where the main crops of dry rice, buckwheat and millet are raised, are mostly above the level of the houses; so that it is by no means unusual for people to have fields three or more miles away from their houses, and three thousand feet higher up or lower down the mountain side. Consequently field-houses are built for 241 those periods when there is heavy work to be done in the fields— 342 either weeding, or chasing away predatory birds and beasts from the ripening crops, or harvesting. In the permanent cultivations down in the valley these field-houses are solidly built structures, consisting only of a single room but otherwise in all respects similar to the ordinary Lepcha house. In some cases they are permanently inhabited by one or two members of a household either for reasons of health or because they do not agree too well with the other members. These field-houses however are built at any time without any ceremony for the selection of the site or at any time in the course of construction; and they are not included in the house-tax. The field-houses in the temporary cultivations are very flimsy affairs chiefly made out of matting.

481 The extremely precipitous nature of the ground renders travelling extremely difficult for Europeans who are accustomed to levelled paths and who walk shod. The Lepchas, owing to long habit, are magnificent walkers and climbers, and can cover enormous distances without apparent fatigue or breathlessness. I found the descent to the river which I made one day to witness the repairing of the bamboo bridge—a descent of about three thousand feet in a mile and a half—and the return therefrom, almost exhausting; the Lepchas will make the same journey without discomfort two or three times a day. Their physical strength and agility is amazing; [482] over paths, or rather tracks, where experienced mountaineers need to use both hands, the Lepchas will carry heavy loads on their backs. Indeed one day Chala Mandal, the head of the village, after he had been recounting semi-legendary, semi-historical stories of the past exploits of the Lepchas, said with a deprecating smile 'Nowadays all the Lepchas are good for is carrying loads.'

vi

776 Writers about Sikkim and Tibet who incidentally mention the Lepchas refer to them with surprising unanimity as 'animists'; and the references to devils' habitations in the desiderata for a house-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

Consequently the recognised
778 habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should
776 a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps
[782] burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter —so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and
[753] his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

782 The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

778 There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular
782 lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To
753 these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the
614 customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 be rubbed over the body. Some men also carry a little arrow poison in a bag fastened inside their clothes over the heart. The greater number of people however do not take any of these precautions.

For the Lepchas devils are rather similar to the witches in European folklore; they are malevolent but not necessarily particularly intelligent; and there are numerous stories of devils being fooled by fairly simple devices, just as the witch was fooled in the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. There is no belief at all in ghosts or *revenants*; should the simulacrum of a dead person be seen it would be a devil in disguise. But although many people told me of having heard or seen devils, I did not hear a single story of any one seeing the dead or absent.

vii

133 This then is the landscape in which the rest of the book is set. To the south the hills rise steeply to an invisible crest; to the north the ground descends precipitously to the hidden Talung river, and then rises opposite even more steeply; behind the fairly barren hills are the peaks of Siniolchi and its eastern neighbours, jagged black rock topped with gleaming snow. At the western end of the Talung valley rises the stupendous mass of Kinchenjunga and its neighbouring peaks, Gods and the home of Gods. To the east are the green hills of Sikkim, and beyond the ragged snow-mountains which mark the frontier of Tibet.

For the European the landscape is one of overwhelming beauty, spoilt only by the very considerable difficulty of travelling about, so rocky and precipitous is the land. The picture I should like to [137] convey is of a very steep and broken series of hillsides, except in small clefts nearly bare of big trees, but almost entirely covered with low growths of shrubs and saplings of various tints of green, flecked with patches of colour at some seasons; the yellow sweet-smelling daphne *edgeworthiana*, the blue hydrangea-like flower of *dichroa febrifuga*, the rich purple of the Sikkim rose. Here and there, scattered over the hillsides, are pieces of cleared and burned land, with the larger tree-trunks standing up lopped and charred; pieces of land placed in seemingly quite arbitrary positions, with large stretches of green between them. Down in the valley the ground appears slightly more cultivated; there are roughly terraced fields fenced with bamboo hurdles, and occasional small rectangles

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

556 feckless or unlucky who have not the ground to use the help which is their due are given grain for their labour. Only with cardamum, which is a money-producing, and not a food-producing crop, is help paid for with money. The care of orphans, cripples, idiots [136] and other helpless people in exchange for the labour they can give cannot be considered as exploitation.

776 Although riches and prosperity are so desirable they are fraught with supernatural dangers; there is a devil called Ginoo *moong* 556 which attacks the over-prosperous; it is in a way Nemesis, and in a way the incarnation of other people's envious thoughts. The origin of Ginoo *moong* is told in the following story:

773 'Once upon a time there was a family called Ginoo, which consisted of seven brothers and one sister. The seven brothers had a 539 house in Lingthem up above the monastery; they had seven wives and seven sons and seven daughters and seven sons-in-law and seven daughters-in-law; they were so numerous that they could do all the field-work between here and Mangan in one day and would eat between them a whole goat at one meal. However these people had no oxen, no jewels, and no permanent cultivation.[3] When they went out to work two people had to stop at home to do the cooking and one to gather leaves for the fire. Their sister lived lower in the valley; she was a widow and had a single daughter, but she had sixty heads of oxen and many necklaces and jewels, so heavy that they weighed six seers. This woman was a Mun; she lived in the house, while her daughter slept in a shed.

'Now the brothers grumbled and spoke among themselves saying "We have nothing, no jewels and no cattle, and we could use them; our sister is a widow and excessively rich; if we were to kill her we should possess all her wealth." So they made a plan and they went up to her house at dead of night and cut her to pieces with their knives and crept back unobserved. When this occurred the daughter who was sleeping in the shed woke up with a start, thinking "What is the matter with my mother?" And she was frightened and ran to her mother's house. When she arrived there she found the verandah spattered with blood, and inside her mother sat trembling. The brothers had hacked her body to pieces but she was a very powerful Mun and all the pieces had joined together. The mother said to her daughter "Why have you come? Your maternal uncles have killed me. Now you are here go and gather

[177] [3] It is interesting to note the manner in which these very recent signs of wealth have been incorporated into the old story.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 539 'From that time Ginoo *moong pandi* and Linthem *anyou* destroy all those who are too prosperous or have too many children. That is the reason why you should never remark on a person's prosperity; for if Ginoo *moong* hears you they will lose everything.'

776 Ginoo *moong* still claims victims today. One of the latest was the wife of Ongden, one of the richest members of the community, unique in having six healthy sons. She was always grumbling, saying how poor she was and how little ground they had been able to sow; to which the neighbours would reply 'How greedy you are; you are really very prosperous.' Ginoo *moong* heard this talk, and so she died, while still young. It is also perhaps the [421] fear of Ginoo *moong* which makes Lepchas so reluctant to say what 124 their property is; it was practically the only subject on which people were secretive and unwilling to talk; most of the information I obtained on the subject I got from neighbours. The majority [556] of the households are all on nearly the same economic level; four or five are somewhat above, and three below the average.

iii

243 The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Zongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamum, and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side [249] a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised. The wet rice is naturally exclusively cultivated on the terraced fields, which are capable of being flooded. Seven different types of wet rice are recognised—two of them being suitable for cultivation on the higher terraces, while the other five need the warmer climate of the valley. Some of the richer people grow these five varieties in rotation, as this is believed to rest the soil, the variety sown depending on individual choice; in these cases the seed is not saved, but is bought each year, generally from Gangtok. The majority however only grow one variety and save their own seed.

In Lingthem wet rice has been introduced for less than twenty years, and in other villages even more recently; some places, especially on the far side of the Talung, where the natural water is [242] less plentiful, do not grow it yet. When the Mandal first learned about this crop he had experimental terraces made for three years; it was then gradually adopted by the other villagers, as they became convinced of the superior yield of this crop, and the amount of terraced ground is increased annually. Almost every household

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and powerful is the Jamyong *ptso* to which Chala Mandal belongs. Eleven of the thirty-two households belong to this *ptso* representing in all sixty-two individuals, or nearly a third of the population of the village (176); but from this number must be subtracted the twenty-one married women from other *ptso*; I have not reckoned the daughters who have married into other *ptso*. Zumchyung *ptso*, to which Tafoor and his family belong, is the next most populous; it represents five households and thirty-one people, less the ten married women. At the other end of the scale are the Demik and Lubdong Rabji *ptso*, with only a single representative of each—Katel and Pargeut—in the neighbourhood. As far as I can tell from questioning visitors to Lingthem, the situation is similar in the other bigger villages; one or two large and numerous *ptso*, of which the Mandal is nearly always a member, and several other smaller ones.[1]

There is a slight advantage in belonging to a numerous *ptso* because you have more people you can call 'brothers' on whose help you can count automatically; but it is not an overwhelming advantage, on account of the Lepcha habits of co-operation, and some of the richest and most successful people of Lingthem were members of small *ptso*. In the choice of a son- or daughter-in-law the size of the *ptso* is sometimes taken into consideration; it is better for a child-in-law to come from a numerous *ptso*, for then there will be greater possibility of obtaining a second spouse, in the event of the first one's sterility or death. A stranger such as Tempa who marries into a populous *ptso* (his wife's father was Jamyong *ptso*) has the same advantages as if he were himself a member of it and his wife's relations behave to him exactly as if they were his own.

Each *ptso* is under the guardianship of certain supernaturals, who are worshipped by all the male members of the *ptso*; every third year all the men of one locality gather together and make a sacrifice of an ox and certain jewels and valuables (these latter are only symbolically offered and are subsequently retaken into use) followed by a feast; these feasts are held in rotation in the houses of the members of the *ptso* who live in the neighbourhood. This sacrifice is entirely under the direction of the Mun, with no admixture of lamaism at all, and a few of the more pious lamas refuse to participate in them, claiming that the lamas have in Chukyoong *rum* a 'guild' supernatural more powerful and more worthy of worship than the

[1] The distribution of *ptso* in Lingthem is tabulated in Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 gods of the *ptso*; but the greater number of lamas feel no meta-
776 physical qualms and bear their full share in this Mun ceremony. The *ptso* supernaturals are always invoked by the Mun when they perform a ceremony for the benefit of a particular individual. In the Mun theogony all the *ptso* supernaturals are friendly and there is no rivalry between the groups; it is thought that the more populous the *ptso* the stronger the guardian supernaturals.

The *ptso* supernaturals descend, as it were, from father to son; women have other different supernaturals which descend from mother to daughter; with the consequence that brothers and sisters have different guardian supernaturals, although all children are counted as members of their father's *ptso*. (An exception must be
[848] made in the case of unacknowledged bastards, who are considered to be members of the *ptso* of their mother's father.) These women's supernaturals are invoked, along with numberless others, at the Mun ceremonies after sowing and harvesting, and special sacrifices are made in their intention in the case of illness. Special sacrifices are also made to them at the time of the marriage feast, and the questioning of the bride about her special supernaturals is one of the most formalised incidents in the marriage ceremonies.
776 There are certain other supernaturals which are common to all women; these include Ami *rum*, the god of riches, and Katong Fi who visits women in their dreams and copulates with them at the time of their menses; this dream-copulation is meant to continue throughout life, and should a month pass without this dream it means that the woman is shortly going to die. Parallel to these exclusively female supernaturals are Pong *rum*, and his wife Shing *rum*, the patrons of hunting, who are worshipped exclusively by men. There are also other supernaturals who are as it were patrons of each sex respectively, and yet others who belong to the family, as distinct from the *ptso*. Among the countless supernaturals with which the world is filled these personal and private ones have no great significance; along with numberless others—the enumeration of gods in a Mun sacrifice may take two or three hours—they are prayed to for the blessings of long life, many children, and prosperity, but their power is not considered to be great.

614 Except as an exogamic classification the *ptso* is now functionless. Although members of the different *ptso* are scattered, not only throughout Zongu, but wherever Lepchas live, the triennial unions only gather those members who live near one another; to the best of my knowledge there has never been, nor has there ever

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incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lamaist supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law, I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

●776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer
539 on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat
581 shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for
[881] advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities
Itpomu and Narzong-*nyu*. Itpomu herself is never directly
●776 invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

J: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told 841 in a number of tales. One of these stories I think worth repeating, for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; 539 it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

●776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

survive the arduous journey to Mayel from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayel have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people, Adoo Yook and Alau Yook, have in a way as wives the two sisters called Talyeu Nimu and Sangvo Nimu, who are the spirits of the earth; these two women lie on their backs under the earth and on their bellies are the cultivatable lands; into this Adoo Yook and Alau Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as if it were human seed from a husband, and the women are fertilised and fruitful.

In the old days the path to Mayel was open and sometimes the people of Mayel used to come into the other parts of the world and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayel country. Thus the people of Mayel helped to build the palace of Fyung Di near Pemionchi where the Kings of Sikkim lived before the war against the Nepali. While they were building the palace they ate and talked like ordinary people; but when, after its completion, people were accompanying them home, the people of Mayel walked and talked with them as far as a certain mountain and then disappeared in a clap of thunder. Old people also say that in the spring the people of Mayel go into Tibet, either to Lhassa, or to Yambo Zikchu, where they sell pumpkins and cucumbers and egg-plants and chillies. When the Maharajah was living at Chumbi some old Lepchas accompanied him there and saw the people of Mayel selling these plants; the rest of the suite being Sikkimese and Tibetans did not recognise them but the Lepchas naturally did so immediately; as soon as they were recognised the people of Mayel disappeared; as it was nobody knew whence they came or whither they were going.

About six generations ago two people found their way into the Mayel country. One of these was Jiroong's ancestor who was hunting and went past Sakhyong and over two distant peaks; there he saw floating in a stream a branch of a certain sort of tree which he realised must have been thrown there by the people of Mayel and he followed the stream up. He reached a path as narrow as a razor edge on which were the feathers of the Mayel birds which had died on the return journey. After passing this ridge the hunter followed the road for three days round the mountain and came to the village of Mayel and there saw seven houses and asked for shelter for the night. They had big pigs lying down and they killed a pig and gave him pork to eat and rice and *chi*. The hunter

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 stayed there seven days and when he went away the people of Mayel asked him not to talk about them when he returned; and they gave him as gifts rice seed which he sowed and the fruit of pumpkin and cucumber which turned into stone.

Another hunter from Sakhyong also found his way there but he was not so fortunate. When he came to the village he found a child and asked him 'Who are your father and mother?' The child said 'We are our own fathers and mothers, we are babies and young people and old people'. The man then picked and cooked some rice. When the people came near he threatened them with his knife. At this they said to him 'Do not do that; cook and eat your rice and go away. If you do not we will drive you away with our dogs'. When they said that he looked round and saw huge dogs like bears with enormous eyes. Then he was very frightened and ran away at once with some of the cooked rice in his hand. As he ran home there was a terrific thunderstorm, and he was pelted with snow and hail. Since the time of these adventurous travellers the road has been closed with an enormous rock.

ii

241 The people of Mayel are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of dry rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long lists of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in those houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops, and, after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered *sakyou faat* to ensure a good harvest. Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayel; the others come from different supernaturals. Barley, wheat, buckwheat and wet rice come from Kongsen-bu, the God of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said[2] comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-*nyou*, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayel are said to share this dislike, and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the

[2] See Chapter Three, p. 92.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor 776
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which 152
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[197] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 5

Lamaism: Monks and Nuns

TO the ignorant Lepcha the world is peopled by 776
spirits; evil spirits known as *Mung*, and good spirits known as *Rum*, or gods. It is difficult sometimes to decide whether a particular spirit is devil or god; for while a Mung is always evil, a Rum, if angered, will appear in a malicious guise and may then be referred to as a demon. Every happening in the material world is due to the influence of spirits. Devils cause sickness, bad harvests, and every other kind of misfortune: but provided they are appeased by means of the correct sacrifices their evil can be averted, and on occasions they may even be induced to further some particular project, such as causing the death of an enemy, or winning the heart of some apparently stony-hearted woman. Some earlier writers have described the Lepchas as animists, but I believe this idea to be mistaken. Animism implies the attribution of a living soul to inanimate 774
objects and natural phenomena; but the Lepcha has not this belief. According to his ideas, trees, rivers, rocks and other natural objects are only the homes of spirits; but as such they must be treated with proper respect. The objects themselves, however, while they are sometimes thought to possess a separate soul, do not need to be propitiated. When a house, 774
for instance, is being built, a sacrifice will be made when the 782
trees are felled from which it is to be constructed. This sacrifice, however, is offered not to the spirits considered to be inherent in the trees themselves, but to compensate for any annoyance which might be caused to spirits living in them, and also as a general expiation for the sin of taking life; for trees, being living things, are thought to have separate souls of their own. This last is only a minor

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with
whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook,
and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the
house. No arrangements have so far been made for her
marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner
during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age.
He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him
do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons
would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of
devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and
even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after
dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the
time to Gūru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru
Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and
would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his
wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the
least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom
he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was
sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books.
After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. - Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159
teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754
thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776]
Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did
this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682
within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673]
own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma
Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his
wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her
house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753]
spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery:
hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black
and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a
very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage,
and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from
him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776]
people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot
help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she
dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then
be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this
old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's
father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was
believed that she always carried the poison on her person,
and for this reason he followed her to the fields and com-
pletely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was
shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor
says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the
same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly
hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take
his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the
story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father
searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really
does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old
woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159 753

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

three days to tell. Gongyop was very anxious that we should 756
write it down; but the flesh was not sufficiently strong! At the end of his third year an ox was sacrificed, and his teacher pronounced him as fit, although he has still a number of things to learn. He cannot, for instance, do the *Sanglion*, a special rite performed at death. He thinks it a curse to be a Mun, and hopes his son will never have to be one. In his opinion a Lama is more powerful than a Mun; but the latter is probably more efficient when it is a question of merely driving demons away.

I asked Gongyop if the Padim god was angry when he 756
became a Mun. "No," he said, "the two gods are husband 776
and wife, and the Padim god was glad because the Mun had come to share houses (i.e. Gongyop's body) with him. The Padim god does not call his wife, but is naturally glad when she arrives." The spirits are not always present in his body. When they come he feels a heavy burden, as though he is carrying an immense weight. These particular gods normally live in a place on the other side of Kinchinjunga, which mountain they have to cross to reach him. At the time of their arrival he feels a weight pressing him down. When they are in possession of his body he is able to prophesy. At such 756
times he does not know what he is saying, nor has he after- 787
wards any recollection. He cannot call the spirits up at will 776
and only prophesies twice a year: once in summer and again in winter. He generally feels ill the evening before, and only becomes normal again from cock-crow on the morning following the "possession." He feels heavy and depressed; also he cannot stand noise. He trembles all the time and sweats profusely. During this time he must pray to the gods to find out what must be done. He has no particular feelings at the time of possession; but at the moment when the spirits actually enter his body everything goes black in front of him, after which he remembers no more. He sits cross-legged on the floor making offerings; by his side is a necklace of flowers and a decorated stick known as *Sagyi-patung*. Suddenly he feels as though he is being poked all over with

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776] the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751] does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164] arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper
[531] must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

●[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is
[578] between the two. This trouble has come from some other person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal'
blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in fron
of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards th
mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which i
was taken away and divided up among all present by th
Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child wa
[865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helpe
in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early mornin
778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation o
a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form o
Yay, and its function is the same as that already described fo
the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece o
bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated wit
white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamente
[776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as
house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the man
special devils of illness. It was not completed until abou
four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed y
another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time
sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bambo
and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was place
in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattere
over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough
millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of th
dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tige
which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeba
made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bambo
sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen bas
A female figure was now made of dough and placed astri
the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in sma
stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, whi
streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many sma
dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round t
central figure, each being stamped with a design which wa
replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the serva
of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now add

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the pátron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778
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Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 275]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this
775 change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very
easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation
[761] of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death
of the human being. To protect small children from this danger,
[751] mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string
with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

753 Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of
761 malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies,
in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their
● 776 influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names
and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts
of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially
dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through
illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul.
A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung*
and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time
widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have
vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even
in the remotest parts of Sikkim.

776 *Sang grong mung* and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas
mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes.
Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human
flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into
their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met
the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept
the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and
not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied
by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just
like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed
lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly
ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been
very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could
change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into
a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house,
where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the
man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her
jealous husband.

776 Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a
person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge
764 black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away. 776 764

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death. 776 761 828

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol kung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one. 776 764 775

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life 776

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo sǎ rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

775 At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a 764 *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

[764] When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water ; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
796 and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
● 776 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
778 The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
778 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bŏn religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it
775 may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*. 796 778 171

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bón terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bón priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28] 796 171

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bón flowers" is mentioned in Bón scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bón origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called 796 778 776

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Ann/yst]

rum by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

As in the first rite, the number nine plays an important part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *looh lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yeu*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yeu*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *looh lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yeu*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yeu* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly
●776 resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
777 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
778 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical
1711 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the
778 Tibetan *Rube*, *Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which [787]
was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depicted alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches 778
in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
776 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
●776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.
In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud*- demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 776 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

755 778 171

[1] [see cat.116, p.78. – Analyst]

755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
171 is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
778 all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders
[776 seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the
171] *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[774] If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
796 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
776 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
778 [see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

described,[42] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancieut Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz : Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy : *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom : *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are :

DAS S. CH. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

SCHLAGINTWEIT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet, Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not
192 through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[551] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all the tribal groups (*a-gir*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
103 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular
192 valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Naw-tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-rak-min*' and '*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*gö*', (gos) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little
● 776 description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 88); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

●776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Ta-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-e*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those
[153] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-z'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have
[622] developed any organized coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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[1]) loc. cit. 9.

192 [2]) *Ta-shi* is from *Ta* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tsak* head, and *bo* father — literally "the giver".

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-teng*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Ta-she*, the Tibetan *Shé* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nung-lyen-no* and *Ka-t'ung-ñi*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sáñ-fok*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sákong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *Do-lak* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 268.

•776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama- [177] temples.

756 The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [153] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by carving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yak* or *Yak-mas* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipol-bo*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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CHAPTER III

THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES OF SIKKIM

A. The Lepchas

The Lepches or Lepchas are supposed to be the original 101
inhabitants of Sikkim. They call themselves Rong; the Tibetans call them Mon, and the Bhutanese, Meri. The Mongoloid problem can best be studied through the Lepchas of the Southern Himalayas and hence they are dealt with more thoroughly.

According to one opinion the Lepchas are supposed 173
to have come not from Tibet, but from the east of the mountains from Assam and Upper Burma.[22] Their own tradition, however, states that their original home was in the neighbourhood [103]
of the great mountain, Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga[23] the second highest mountain in the world. That is the Tibetan name and means the "Great Glacier of the Five Store-rooms." The Lepcha name for the mountain is, "King-tzum-song-bu." King-tzum means "Highest part of the forehead," song-bu means "the highest." Literally it means, "the highest over our head." This Lepcha name is reproduced phonetically by the Tibetans as "Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga," which has quite a different meaning. This snow-covered mountain has [776]
an important part to play as the habitat of the spirits. King-tzum-rum is the god of happiness; Rum-king-tzum is the god of fate.[24] From it the Lepchas derive the name Rong, by which they are known. Rong means "peak" or "mountain peak" and has the same significance as the word Arong.

Another tradition has it that the place of their origin is on the holy mountain Kailasa (Ti se) way up in Tibet. On the mountain is the stone Ne-long which bears the footprints [778
of Buddha and of animals. The god, Pum-rum, protector of 776]
the hunters, lives there. Pum-rum is also another name for the Supreme God of the Lepchas as we shall soon see. The

22. J. C. White, Sikkim and Bhutan, London, 1909, p. 7.
23. Kangchenjunga, Fig. 17 & 18.
24. G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, Berlin 1898, 17a, 356 b.

[p. 29]

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173 oldest homeland bears the name Damsang. We have here an inkling of the Tibetan Lama influence, which, as in Hindu tradition, links the original homeland with the holy district. Since the King-tzum-song-bu is very closely linked with the myths of the Lepchas we shall go more deeply into a study of it.

(a) MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

773 The myths of the creation are of special importance.
776 "Create" in the Lepcha language is called "ayit" or "it" in its abbreviated form. Another word for create is "de-bo." "It-rum" or "de-rum" means "god of creation"; "Rum" by itself means "god." "Pum-thing-rum" signifies the same. "Pum bo" means "Principal," "Chief," "God." The name "It-bo" or "It-bo-mu" is again taken from the creative action of god. Other names are, "Ta-she-thing," "Sa-dzug-rum." The latter are connected with the sun god and are used by some as the emblem of the Supreme God.

The following is the myth about creation: In ancient times Rum created a great expanse of water. Nothing else existed at the time. Then he created on the bed of the water the fish "ngo." Next he formed three pairs of deities who lay down crosswise on the fish. The first of the pairs were Rug-lu and Rug-lom, and after them were Mon-li and Röng-gul, Pö-ril and Pö-dong. These are three pairs of male and female deities. Over these were fashioned Söm-li and Söm-nag-mön-mu, a couple who as man and wife are supposed to belong to the human race. They all carried the earth which rested on them in the form of a dish. The slightest movement of the fish resulted in earthquakes. Rum then created the great mountains of the earth, the chief of which is King-tzum-song-bu; then four more peaks, Pön-dam, Pön-tzum-dju, Pön-tzum-tang-rem-dju, Don-dong-tang-nyik-dju. Another story records that two chief mountains were created, *viz.*, the Kang-chen and the Kang-lo. Another Mun makes a contrary statement, "The snow-capped mountain Kang-chen-rum was created first and as a companion to it, Nyo-ling-rum, the goddess of the great ocean was created." In some versions of this story the goddess is named Lyang-ser-

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dong-bong, who is a mountain goddess in the plain. There exist many other variations about the sequence of creation. 773 776

Then Rum made the two rivers, Rong-nyo and Rong-nyit, to flow down from the mountains. They are male and female. In the middle of the female Rong-nyo, he created the rock, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, similar to the navel in the human body. A high mountain, regarded as the navel of the world is a well-known conception in Asia. The goddess, Lyang-nyit-long-bong, is supposed to live on this rock and childless parents pray to her to be blessed with children. The idea of male gods having their abode on the snow-capped mountains and the goddesses in the lakes, is fairly common among the Lepcha. These gods and goddesses are often linked with the first parents in Lepcha mythology.[25]

The sacrificial prayers of the Mun and the Bong thing are often preceded by a legend of creation. The text which we shall later render in detail begins thus :

"Fa dong dju fa dong dö gom shi gom yu rum ! 773
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (personal male and female 776
deities) and Gom shi, Gom yu rum (hunting gods). 539
Lyang it ung it lyang sog döm it
The earth was created, the water was created and the whole world was created.
Chi log so log it
Millet beer and husked rice were created
Lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Lyang wife, and Tög bu ta she's son (man) were created"[26]

Another part reads as follows :

"Ayan na ba lyang ung ma it ma den na ba.
In very ancient times when land and water were not yet created."

An old report has the words :

"Ta she nun rum ayit .....Ta she created the good spirits
Num shim nyo ayit .....He created man.
Lyang ayit .....He created the earth.
Ung ayit .....He created water
Gun pang ayit .....He created all things."[27]

25. Report of Gu-gu Bong thing at Gît biyong.
26. Text of Gu-gu Bong thing.
27. Dictionary of the Lepcha language, op. cit., p. 121 b.

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773 Another myth of creation reads as follows: "In the beginning, the world was all water, and there were no living [774] creatures. Then the Creator made an earthenware pot that floated on the water, and this was land that floated on the sea. Like a human body that is made of flesh and bones the earth is made of rock and soil.

In the lowlands the Creator planted the bamboo, the sisin-nambong. After that, he made the Lang-chuk Lang-dal, that are now known as the Himalaya mountains, and he created the pa-song pumun bamboo which grows at the foot of these hills. And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female, and it is from these two that human beings were spread over the entire world. Then there was neither birth nor death; but this was created later to suit the world.

The seeds of all the crops were given by Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu to all their children who cultivated the [773] land and lived on the produce."[28] If the elements are connected with creation it is surely due to Tibetan and Hindu influence. [772] In the lowest region is the wind, and above it are fire, water and earth.[29] However, only two elements are mentioned: Ti-gung-thik, the first man who is supposed to be identical with fire, and Ni-gung-ngal, the first woman, who is identical with water.[30]

Apart from the earth the heavens were also decked out with the sun, moon, stars and clouds created by Rum.[31] It is also narrated that in the beginning there were two suns in the sky. One of these shone by day and the other by night. As it never grew dark, the earth suffered from incessant heat, and so one of the suns was shot down. Seven or more moons were supposed to have existed.[32] These, too, are mythological [771] themes which the Lepchas have in common with the Indo-Chinese peoples. Myths about creation are very numerous among these tribes.[33]

28. C. B. Stocks, Folklore and Customs of the Lepchas of Sikkim, Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal, N. S. Vol. XXI, 126/127. N. 4. p. 350.
29. C. B. Stocks, op. cit., p. 345.
30. Story as told by a Bong thing from Git biyong.
31. cfr. op. cit. p. 439.
32. op. cit. p. 336, Note 1, p. 363 sq.
33. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, An account of the Lepchas of Sikkim, London 1938, p. 223 sq.; cfr. The Song of Creation in Waddell, Among the Himalayas, London, 1900, p. 294 sq.

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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164 787] goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 777] sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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and on their bellies are the cultivable lands. Into this Adoo- 776
Yook and Alau-Yook send rice and millet and maize, just as [776
if it were human seed from a husband and the women are 772]
fertilised and fruitful.

In the old days the path to Mayal was opened and sometimes the people of Mayal came to other parts of the world; and occasionally adventurous hunters found their way into the Mayal country."[36] According to other stories not only the seven brothers but all the ancestors of the Lepchas live in Mayal.

Another Lepcha named Ti-gung-a-thik and Ni-gung-a- 773
ngal as the original ancestor. They lived a happy life and could hunt and roam wherever they liked. Food was available everywhere. Suffering and death were unknown to them. Their land was called Nemayal. Two Lepcha hunters once came to the land. The inhabitants gave them the seeds of gherkins, millets, rice and maize. The hunters however, forgot to ask them when the seeds were to be sown. So they went back again and asked them for the necessary instructions. The people of Mayal said, "When the ducks come back from Tibet, then you must sow the seed." That is February or March. Still they did not know a suitable season for planting the other seeds. They had, therefore, to spend a great deal of time making experiments until they found the most suitable times for sowing the seeds. Among these seeds was rice, which was supposed to be used only for sacrificial purposes. They chewed the husks of rice to see if the seed was ripe, and, finding it sweet, they began to consume it as food for themselves.[37]

The Dän-ai Bong-thing from the Song-bur-mu tribe, who lives in Kafir-Basti, gave us the following information: The Lepchas come from Song-bur-tchu on the left of the Kang-
chen-mdzod-lnga. In the beginning there existed only the 773
god Rum. No demons existed at the time. The god had 776
no special name. He then created a pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, who are the protecting spirits of procreation. Ta-ahe-thing and Tög-bu-thing then came into being. But

36. op. cit. p. 226 sq.
37. Report from Sam-ding near Maria-Basti.

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773 the real god of creation is It-bo. He has a wife by name of
[776] De-bo. (It-bo and De-bo mean "to produce" and "to create.") It-bo first created a man Ti-gung-thik. He then took a bone from the body of this man and out of it he created a wife for him. The place where the first human beings lived was called Da-lon-par-tan. (This is also the plain in which the tower intended to reach heaven was constructed.) The first couple lived there in perfect happiness and contentment until they became sinful. When they fell into sin the god Rum punished them by sending great floods which continued unabated for fifteen days so that all the people were drowned. Only one Lepcha couple were able to save themselves in a wooden ship.

Stocks narrates the following myth of creation : "In the beginning there was only sea, and the creator Tashey-takbo-
[772] thing made two kinds of fish,—ngo, was the common kind, while the ngo-yang had a serpent form. From the sea we believe that a tortoise supports the world, and on it Tashey-takbo-thing created birds and animals.

Then he tried to make a form of man from butter, but it would not stand up, as whenever he made it, it melted. (Had the butter only remained firm, we should all have been very beautiful). Then he made a human form of earth and mud, and wind came into this resemblance of man and life was created. Then Tashey-takbo-thing made blood out of the water which he put in it and the bones he created from stone. Then he moved away to see whether the creature he had made could answer him and speak, but as he had no nerves or veins he was unable to do so. So Tashey-takbo-thing picked a great many creepers from the jungle and from those which he spread all over the form, it spoke.

Thus was the first male created, but as there was no female he was lonely, and could not reproduce himself. One day as he was catching birds with his snare in the jungle, Tashey-takbo-thing entangled a woman in one for him to catch. So the man caught her and brought her to his home ; but at first they could not marry as there was no go between to help them to talk over the matter. But at last the Rum decided to send the owl (tam-bum) down the country of creation,

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It-lyang."[38] This myth is interesting because it relates, in the first place, the two efforts made by God to create man, and secondly because it relates how God brought the woman into the life of the man, by placing her in some mysterious way in the snare set by man to catch birds. 773

According to another myth the genealogy of mankind is even more complicated. Among the various creatures that were created as It-mo's children, there is also Takbo-thing, who hitherto had been designated as the god of creation. Ta-she is added to the name with whom we shall become more closely acquainted later on. "The last two to be born were Takbo-thing and Nazong-ngyu, and although these were brother and sister, they became husband and wife and had many children."[39] These children however were evil spirits and demons. They were not nourished by their mother, but were disowned and driven away. They live not on the earth but outside the earth. The reason why monsters were born out of this wedlock was surely due to the forbidden and irregular marriage between brother and sister. Rum then separated them. After the separation a human being was born. The mother loved this child deeply and fed it at her breast. When the other children perceived this they grew very jealous, hated the child intensely and so it died. The grief-stricken mother sent two birds up to Tak-bo-thing in order to fetch from him the Water of Life and the Water of Death. Tak-bo-thing gave them both the waters and instructed them about the use of the waters. On their return flight the birds decided not to use the directions as they had been given to them but to reverse them. And so it happens that men die and are always born again. Rum stands as a symbol to man. The Mung demons, on the contrary, do not die, and a priest-magician, Bong-thing, was sent to keep them under control. Only then was it possible for man to live on the earth. He is called Tar-bong-mu. As he was catching birds one day he found a fairy, the daughter of the Lha-ma-yin.[40] He forcibly took this beautiful Na-rib-nom as his wife. To avoid the misfortune consequent [585]

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38. op. cit. p. 355 sq.
39. op. cit. p. 346.
40. Tibetan name for Titans.

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to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 354.

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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth 773
he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made 776
his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nazong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each [782
year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal 241]
most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in 776
Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-köb, and the daughter, Bi-köb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-köb and Bi-köb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices [782]
performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni- [773]
gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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776 consequence they had to labour in order to procure their
[773] livelihood. These first human beings are the parents of the Rong (Lepcha), the Brug-pa (Bhutanese) and the Jimdar (Nepalese). The very first man, the progenitor of the race, is Ti-gung-pum." So far the statement of Sa-liang. And so we have different traditions that tell the story of the first human beings. Often entire genealogies of gods and spirits are quoted.[43] Finally, the immediate ancestors of mankind make their appearance. The presence of evil in the world is sometimes attributed to them, for, being brother and sister, they live as man and wife, without the proper performance of the marriage ceremonies. Other myths offer other solutions for the problem of evil in the world.

(c) MYTHS OF THE DELUGE

773 "In the beginning all men were good. Gradually they grew perverse. This annoyed Rum to such an extent that he sent a great deluge to destroy them all. Only one high mountain peak remained above the water. This was originally called Dōng-grung, a ladder which links earth with heaven. The mountain is now called Dān-dong. In order to appease god and make the flood abate, the people sacrificed chi, millet beer, through the bird 'ko-hon,' (partridge). As the bird sprayed the chi in sacrifice to heaven some of it fell on its breast. This fact is supposed to explain why even today, the bird's breast is bitter to the taste. The sacrifice was pleasing to god and the flood abated."

We have still another version of this tradition, "Rong-nyo, the female river, and Rong-nyit, the male, were deliberating with each other as to how they could meet and unite on the plain at the outskirts of the jungle. In the Lepcha language this place is called Pa-sog. Rong-nyo chose as her guide through the mountains a snake which glided straight to their destination. Rong-nyit chose the partridge as his guide. The bird flew hither and thither and took a confusing route across the mountain, thus causing Rong-nyit to arrive late at the rendezvous. He was very angry when he discovered that Rong-nyo had already arrived. Furiously he shouted, 'I

43. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. 345 sq.

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T73 In another legend the serpent king is connected with the [T76] flood: "....And then he created Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu who were the first male and female and it is from these two that the human beings have spread over the entire world..... When these two were made, birth so multiplied that there was not enough room in the world. Then Parli-bu, who was the serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky. Everyone fled to the top of Kong-chen-chu, the highest peak in the Himalayas, but only two people were saved. The place where they stood is called Mayak-kyong to this day. While the flood was raging, Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world named Yongli-pono, to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent to pieces thus making the waters run down into the plains and we, the Rong folk, still believe that the Blue Mountains (that can be seen from the valley of Rangpo-chu) are the remains of the cut body of the serpent. When the world was dry once again, Tashey-thing sent down two rivers from the Himalaya mountains guided by another serpent called king Paril-patong and a quail, the Ko-hun-fo, and these were Rung-nyo (Tista) and Rung-nyit.

He also sent Pudung-thing and Nazong-gnyu down into the world from the height of Mayal-kyong, giving them the name Tikung-tek and Nikong-gnal. These are the first 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' of the Rong folk. As they had no king, Tashey-thing sent down Gyabo-chaya-dor-tulku from Mayal-kyong and he is the 'grandfather' (ancestor) of the present Maharaja."[48] This legend links the first parents with the flood and the re-peopling of the earth. The name of the first king who is sent by the High God is quite Tibetan and points to Tibetan motifs, according to which, the first king came from heaven.

Mainwaring, the great collector of cultural treasures of the Lepchas, cites the following myth, "It may be noted that the Lepchas have legends in common with divers other primitive races,....regarding the flood and the tower of Babel. The legends were without doubt, brought with them

48. op. cit. 388 sq.

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773 down). They wondering greatly shouted up to ask the man
173 at the top whether he really meant it. This time they heard the words 'ak, ak' (yes, yes). And they at once cut the tower down, which falling, killed many of the Na-ong, and those that remained had to separate on account of their not being able to understand one another. And even today broken earthern pots are to be found on that plain which is called Dalon-partan."[48] And so we see that the Lepchas also possess myths pertaining to the flood, to the building of the tower and the babel of tongues in common with so many other South Asian peoples, *e.g.* the Miau, the Lolo, the Thai, the Mikmir and many others.

(*d*) The Land of the Gods and Spirits

772 The myth describing the building of the tower demons-
774 trates the effort made by the Lepchas to reach Rum-lyang, the land of the gods. The Lepchas are of the opinion that this land lies in the region of the heavens. From this land Rum is supposed to look down to earth. From there too, gods and spirits come down to the land of men, or they send messengers and strange powers in the form of thunderbolts to bring about strange births on earth.[49] On the other hand heroes, and the steeds on which they ride may occasionally fly up to heaven before actual dying. These are the same mythical motifs that are common among the Tibetans.[50]

The ancestral spirits, who, as we saw above, are in Mayal, are sometimes said to be in Rum-lyang. We shall probe into this question more deeply, when we treat about the cult of death.

According to other Lepchas, the land of the gods does not lie above, in the region of the heavens but below. Consequently they call this region "Dhing-song-rum." "Dhing-song" means below. The Kalimpong native on whose authority we have sometimes relied, indulges in the following line of reasoning, "The seed must fall down into the earth before it can spring forth and bear fruit. When it has ripened

48. Stocks, op. cit. p. 289 sq.
49. Stocks, op. cit. p. 336 sq.
50. op. cit. p. 337.

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it falls down to the earth once again. This is the line of action from lower to the higher. And so it must be that the land of the gods must be below." In this as in other matters we find that there is a varied line of reasoning among the Lepchas. 772 776

(e) THE LAND OF SOULS

Some Lepchas believe that the souls of the departed go to the country of the ancestors, Ren djong or Mayal. Others say on the contrary that the soul goes to Rum-lyang. It was there before birth ; thither it returns again after death to be born again as a little child in the land of souls. Immediately after death, the soul goes to an intermediate place Sön-lyang, originally called Söm-lon, the leader of souls. The Bong-thing summons it back thence and asks it, at the death ceremony how it died, whether it was through illness or through the magic of wicked men. The soul then comes to the ear of the Bong-thing and gives him this important information. He makes the necessary provisions for the individual soul on the basis of this information. The Mun or Bong-thing then leads the soul to the Rum-lyang and locks it up securely so that it cannot return to its pristine home or relations or cause them any manner of harm. The entire ceremony is performed in the Sang-lion rite. A year after death the Bong-thing goes in a trance to Rum-lyang, opens up the place where the soul had been locked. There he finds a little child. He dresses it up in a child's clothes and releases it to live and grow up among the other ancestors.[51] 775 [774] [764]

According to others there is an intermediate place called Tiamtan, or Sari-rung-dong-chen or Siri-nong-dong-chen.[52] Another place is called Nyo-lyang, the abode of the wicked. There are divergent views about the land of souls, just as there are about the land of gods. An old Mun woman of Git-biyong gave us this pertinent item of information, "We bring the souls of the dead very high up in to the heavens and very near the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. He it is who has created us, the animals and everything else." [772] [184] [776]

51. cfr. G. Gorer, Himalayan Village, London 1938, p. 353 sq.
52. cfr. Stocks, op. cit. p. 337.

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(f) THE CONCEPT OF GOD

● 776 The Lepchas express the idea of God by the word "Rum." By this term they understand gods and spirits which are favourable to men and who offer them protection. In contrast to the word Rum, they have the word "Mung" to indicate the goblins and the demons who are harmful to man. The Rong possess a few genealogies of gods with which we shall later become acquainted. The name "Rum" standing all by itself expresses the idea of the Supreme God ; but words expressing the special attributes of the Supreme God are often joined to the word "Rum." To cite a few instances : Pum means "first cause," "the essential," "the absolute," "the first beginning," and so we have the words : Pum-rum, Pum-thing or Pum-thing-rum, which are popular names for the Chief God. Then again "ayit (it)," "(ay)it-de," "de-bo," or "(ay) it-bo" mean "to create," "to produce," and we have the words It-rum, De-rum, It-bo and Pum-bo, all of which express the idea of God as the creator. Some of the Lepchas say that the Supreme God is not the creator, but that he delegated the function of creation to some other spirits. In the concept of God that is current among the Rong, we can observe that the original functions of the Supreme God have been attributed to spirits who are looked upon by them as the adjutants and the supporters of the Supreme God. This is how the divine genealogies originate and lead up to a kind of demiurge and other forms.

Some of the Mun and the Bong-thing call the Supreme God, Sa-dzug-rum. Sa-dzug is the sun. Sa-dzug-rum means "sun god" as well as "God of the heavens." "Ta-she-thing" is a very common name for the Supreme Being. Su-li-man, a Lepcha from the Bam-ling tribe, who lives in Se-ryo-cha, gave us this description of the Supreme God. "Ta-she-thing is the Supreme God. He is everywhere. Anyone who understands the rites may offer him a sacrifice." Ta-she-thing is the name given also to Padmasambhava who is the founder of Lamaism in Tibet. Occasionally one meets with the rather long drawn out name "Ta-she-tak-bo-thing." "Tak-bo-thing" or "Tok-bo-thing" is regarded by some as the son of Ta-she-thing. The majority of the Lepchas are of the

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opinion that Rum has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bu-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquite and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god." 776 [796 782]

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."[53] The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Gorer, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Gorer considers It-bo-mo to be female,[54] but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pum-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest 776 224

53. op. cit. p. 237.
54. op. cit. p. 235.

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

776 The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
[778] tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. [821] Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. [753] Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly [278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught 782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[56]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

56. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[792 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

792 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
793 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[176] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[181] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[164] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
● [776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(h) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [688] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

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755 782 up the entire skin. The blood is not used at all. On the little table that is against the wall the Tormas are deposited 778 and in front of them the two butter-lamps. The order of the 776 Tormas is as follows: (See the drawing figs. 20 & 21) 1. Rum-755 thing-bo-a-mu, the wife of the supreme God. 2. Rum-thing-bo-782 a-bo, the Supreme God. 3. Nyom, the daughter-in-law. 4. Rum-thing-bo-ta-gri-köb, the son of the Supreme God. 5. San-tug-kan-dro-mu (San-tug is a place below Algara; Kan-dro-mu is evidently like the Tibetan bKa-gro-ma, a sky fairy.) 6. Don-dyö-chi-log, another spirit who personifies both the intoxicating drinks, dyö and chi. Each of these six deities has on either side of it two servants who are called Bya-ro. Torma number 2, which represents the Supreme God, is the largest. It is about five inches high, of oval shape and is decorated with ten small lumps of butter as is shown in the drawing. Torma number 1, the wife, is smaller, being about four inches high and round in shape with the same decorations of butter. Tormas number 3 to 6 are similar to number 1, except that they are three inches high only. In front of this row are three Ka to, Tormas number 7, 8 & 9. In a squarish socket five cone shaped objects are placed. These are perhaps symbolical of the five-peaked mountain, but we could find out nothing more definite about them. Torma number 10 is a deity, Ka-to-sam or Gon-hiu-so. It is about two inches high, conical in shape, and decorated with streaks of butter. The Tormas of the Bya-ro servants are all alike, a little smaller and devoid of decorations. Before the table on which are placed the Tormas and the butter-lamps, there are five bamboo vessels and a wooden cup filled with chi. The cup, which stands fourth from the left, has its rim decorated with three little lumps of butter and is called San-dyö. We notice here again the names "chi" and "dyö" borne by the sixth deity. In front of these vessels there is a second small table, and six piles of rice placed on six banana leaf-plates lie on it. On top of each pile of rice are deposited a rib of the sacrifice and tiny pieces of the heart, liver, lung, spleen and kidneys. The number SIX is therefore a standard,—there are six principal gods, six chi containers, six piles of rice and six pieces of meat.

A banana leaf-plate containing rice is placed behind the skin on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh had been placed.

[Text continues on p. 63]

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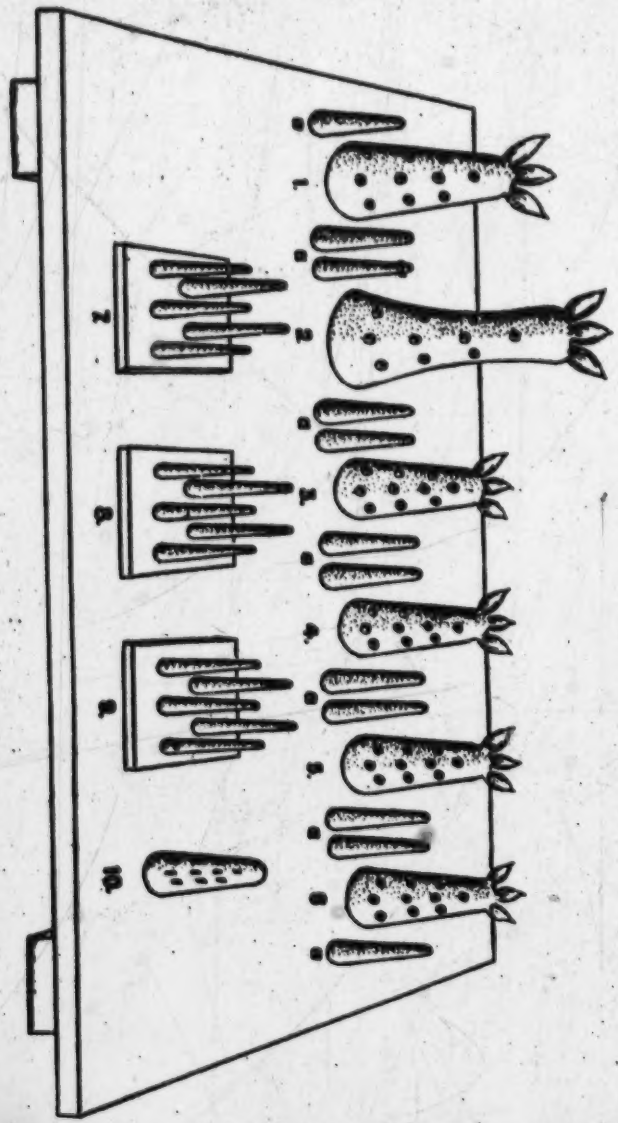

Fig. 20, Tormas of the gods

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On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miă song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

60. sa her rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dang rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyăr pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dăn dong dăm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dăn dang
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu dăm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dăn dong hiu dăm dong hiu o! ŏn sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miă song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

776 I offer the smoke of incense. Come hither! To the father and to
755 the mother I offer gold Torma, I offer money Torma; I offer,
762 I offer, I offer incense to San tug kan dro mu; come hither!
I offer incense; come hither! I offer to Chi, the millet beer spirit, to the rice offering spirit, to Dyö, the millet beer spirit; come hither! Verify this, O God, that we are sick. Come hither and tell it; come here and say it. How the head is racked with pain, the loins ache, the body, the hands, the feet are paining and the belly is aching, this O God verify. Come hither and state it. How the demons bite that examine ye gods; come here and tell it. In this manner I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person. As a substitute for the body and the soul I offer this bull. I offer this substitute of life; I sacrifice this bound bull as a substitute for the body. I sacrifice this bound bull to Ge bu."[60a]

[539] 60a. nyom mu (Daughter-in-law of the Supreme God). yab yum pong Father, mother (Tibetan names for the whole family of the God.)

sang blong ga kög ma o! yab yum dyär pa dong
I offer smoke of incense! Come here! To Father, Mother I offer gold Torma.

gum pa dong dzän dong hiu fat ma o
I offer money Torma, I offer! I offer!

San tug kan dro mu sang blong ga kög gad mao.
To San tug Kan dro mu offer of incense! Come here!

plö blong ga kög gad mao!
offer of incense, come here!

chi log so log sang dyö ma djin blong ga
Millet beer (spirit), Rice offer (spirit), Millet beer (spirit) offer!

kög gad mao so yu song dog non rum dyop ga plö buo dön ga
Come here! That we are sick, examine this O God now. Come here and tell us.

plö buo sareb song adyak non
Come here and say it. How the head aches,

achyang dog non me so dog non a go a tong dog
the loins pain, the body pains, hands and feet pain,

ta bak dog a yu rum pong dyop ga plö buo!
the belly aches. O God examine these things. Come here and tell it.

an sareb song mung nöng tzug bang ga rum dyop ga plö buo
How the demons bite examine that ye gods. Come here and tell it.

alom bö mad big djäk chim yu re söm
In this way I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person.

me sö löm sa lo löm big bu
As a body substitute, as a soul substitute I sacrifice this bull.

sok löm bu me sö löm
I sacrifice this substitute of life, as a body substitute

big djäk bu mo Ge bu long big long djäk bu mo.
this bound bull I sacrifice. To the Ge bu, this bull, this bound bull I sacrifice."

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dūn, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mōn, his wife, Ta-dik-kōb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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755 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of
782 another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa
●776 dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation).
The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created. Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation, so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods
[774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods; dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gom shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar ngag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö nöng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

sung gung man la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

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and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot (bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[539]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung glum rum pong sug ngag la bam
to the water and the flood goods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.
dö dö dsam hi dsam uyong rum pong khing trung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,
ayek alat rum pong dsö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,
ung hon pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life; if I know how to sacrifice, so
sug yu gong nön dö dö khing trung go nöng sug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it; if I do not
nön dö dö a rö a rion plö cho djü la sag yö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know
gong la rum göm
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.
djö la sug ma yö nöng gong na mung göm
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.
dö dö sug la ma yöng gong na mung ai gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.
a lom zog döm ga ayek alat plö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here!
nyö ting sa rum göm go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,
ati adso nong ga su gad shö bu sa yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.
ffö ting ga ning long fat sa yuk goin
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.
go yu son nin sog döm ga chi log so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

755 rice-offerings. Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestors in ancient
782 times did—so do we now. We do not know how to speak in
●776 this world; but we have arranged the sacrifice. As this world's life-spirit we, creatures, hold the branches of the Na sö and Na ling trees. We, the sons of Bong-thing, the Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. That is the place to carry the Na sö and Na ling branches which I take consciously. Now I swear an oath to Ta she tak bo thing. Therefore I push a stone into the earth and I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth (as witnesses of the oath). In this place I take the oath. I do it in our own interest. Today, in this very place I take the oath. The paths of the demons are barred. Through the wonderful powers of Ta she tak bo thing I offer this sacrifice. Henceforward we offer a compensation, a bodily substitute. Send no more suffering to this person."[81b]

[539] 81b. Fat bam a re a thing a niö sa dal thing gung dö si ayit
Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestor did since ancient times,
plö nöng sug bam
so we also perform the sacrifice.
sog döm lyang ga go yusöng dön ma kön go yu rum
In this world we do not know how we should speak. We have arranged
tek so sog
the sacrifice (rum, god, has also the meaning of sacrifice). As this
döm löng ming tang ga son chio nin cho sa liang ga na sö na ling
world's life spirit we, creatures, hold here branches of the Na sö and Na ling
nom bong thing köb
trees (similar to the Nepalese Panisage and Sau tree). We, Bong-thing sons,
bong thing la mi köb nöng ga sog döm ga
we, Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. Here in this place carrying
na sö na ling nom hö nöng go tzam nöng ga.
the Na sö na ling branches, I take hold of them consciously.
ta she tak bo thing riak to long tzog.
To Ta she tak bo thing I swear an oath. I push a stone into the earth.
bu tzum bu yak to nön
I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth. (This ceremony takes place at the swearing and oath taking, so that the oath is sworn over the stone and the bamboo, which are placed side by side.)
sog döm riak to sön tön do ga
Here in this place I take the oath. In our own interest I do it.
sa rong sa ni riak are to nön sog döm ga
Just today I take the oath here. Thus here in this place
mung sa lom chat are tak bo she thing sa
the demons' ways are barred. Now through Tak bo she things' wonder-
a dyän sa löm nöng to Along ren me sü löm
powers, I bring this sacrifice. From now on, a bodily substitute, a
sa lö löm bo son areka gi dök ma hin
compensation we give. Send no more suffering to this person."

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner :

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyō. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[62] The world of the

62. "Fiang it dyō it
Chi's genesis, Dyō's intoxication genesis ! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked on as female ; dyō is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different than millet, and is looked on as a male).

lung tān o ha nang plō — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plō
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

fiang log pair of trees originated ! (Several holy trees are known. Na-sō and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sō-brin. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altag. The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

ang dōn tam ga — son sa dān dog ga rum fig rum plō
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing m a dyān rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tān
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing hob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tān plō
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — ung it — yang ming yang song
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

782 776 [773] demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act. Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner [788] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart. But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears, gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of good things. If we do not know how to act in the right manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God, the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god, Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures, perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[62a]

[539] 62a. to pong sa lung tän rong köb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
döm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön gà tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin köb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
go yu chin lob top chio. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la söm d,u chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors'
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la süm kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog döm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot top chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li top chio dö do nio: myu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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If we accomplish a great amount of work in our fields we shall 782
obtain an abundance of things. Darmit (god) will always 776
grant us a happy destiny. If the lines in our foot and palms are worn out through much work, we shall obtain an abundance of things. If you do not understand how to work, you will not obtain the fruits of blessing. We honour Dar by an adoration of God. I shall perform this work until I sweat blood. Thus I work. A handful, a finger-tip-ful of the sacrifice is offered to the gods of procreation in the other life. Take it, O God, as many sacrifices. These are the fruits of the earth. All people together offer rice. When we sacrifice, many should do it together. That is the right way. God will then be at peace. But if we do not do it, then the gods of procreation will be displeased with us. We, living this life, must eat and work. If we do not work, God will not love us. The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.[82b]

82b. ayot top chio — dö do king tzum darmit na la go chio [539]
we shall obtain abundance. — A good fate, Darmit god will always grant us.

dyang dzum — gö dzum — säd dyet sug gan sa — ayot top chio
If our foot and hand-lines are all worn out through much works, we shall obtain abundance.

sug ma gön na mong — gong nö chiu
If you do not understand how to work you will not obtain

lop apot ma top na — rum sa chiong — dar sö chiong
the fruits of blessings. — As adoration of God we honour Dar.

aiot sug vi oi flet nöng ga — sug bö nang yug sug
I will do this work till I sweat blood. — Thus I work.

mö tsö a ping ga — ayek rum ga — go ri go chion dza
In the other life to the gods of procreation, a handful, a fingertipful

apöt — rum ga blad nom pö tat chio
of the sacrifice is offered. — God, take it as many sacrifices.

apot sog dam are ga-bam — mang sa min de pö nöng
The fruits of this earth are of this kind. — All people together offer rice.

sa hö töng sa sug lang adyap — do sug gad gang na
When we sacrifice, then many should do it together. — Then is it right.

rum na la — apo ni chio — sug ma gön na
For God it will then be peace. — If we do not do it, then will the

ayek alat rum na la ga yum hlum non ne. — tsö are ga bam ba sug la yo sam
gods of procreation be displeased with us. — We, living in this life,

la yong gad chio — sug la ma yu na — gong la rum na la
must work and eat. — If we do not work, then God will

a go ma mad ni rum pum thing hö do sa dön ga — löd nan chiong ta tsäd djä
never love us. — The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will
[761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[82c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who
[781] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 82c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tsäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

sanäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tsäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe plö lad chiang gam anam anom aköb asoo
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom li ma top sag ni rum sa sag ni tag nam che lat nan
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[63] 796 782 796 782 294

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us. [776]

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." [794] Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god. [776]

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has [794 841]

63. Report from Kalimpong.

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the
pso was going through the forest when he came on what he
thought was a dead bear; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of
hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his
incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate
part of it; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said,
'You have eaten part of my body; henceforward you and your
children must serve me and worship me and make offerings
to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat
all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason
why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these
legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing,
gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food
and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game,
and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the moun-
tains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are
looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following
story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who
hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this
theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [538]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly
I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull
was asleep; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified
me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as
if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting
god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds.
The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing
drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We with-
drew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection.

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyem-fast to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice butshe can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice.

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the Myths and the Ritual of the Rong

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The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyö, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dön-dyö-chi-log, who is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

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72. Cir. op. cit. p. 268.

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796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[77] the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan stamping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 268.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 178.

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776 Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow.
782 These sacrifices are common among the different Naga
171 tribes.[101] Lepchas, who during the war came to these parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tedencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11·1·8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse ; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god,
[171] Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. C. R. Stoner, The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1960, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[102] 171
These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult. [776]

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796
Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782
The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171
the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793
such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

102. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

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005 224 them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These [776] hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-shi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The [825] Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

411 The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ¾ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ½ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched p[illegible] in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]

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173 century; about a generation later the Lepchas started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in land must have developed somewhat later; according to native tradition the land below the monastery—that is to say the more protected valley ground—has been divided into private property from time immemorial, but the higher ground was common property and was acquired and cleared as was wanted. At the time of Kahlyeu's father—that is to say about 1840—this ground too was divided up, and today all cultivatable ground is privately owned. Kahlyeu also said that until about 120 years ago only millet was cultivated, and not dry rice; but this seems to me improbable in view of the fact that the religious observances[8] are much more concerned with dry rice, than with millet or any other crop.

342 When new houses are made they are always built in the late autumn months, after the gathering of the harvest. This date is ●777 dictated by two reasons; at no other period would people have sufficient leisure and other dates would be ill-omened. The intending builder gathers materials for some months beforehand. The site of a new house is decided by a number of metaphysical considerations.

[779] First of all there is a lamaist book called Sachet Zai Putta which contains general rules of a very minute nature, indicating what sites are lucky, and what unlucky. This book is said to have been composed by four Gods who gathered together at Gyakar (perhaps Benares) to compile rules so that people should know which sites are good and which bad, which fruitful and which barren, where children can be born, and where they cannot. The following is a small selection of these very detailed regulations:

'A good site is, if there is a mountain to the south and below a slope. It is good if there is a stream on either side of the slope and trees in front. It is good if there is an outcrop of rock to the east and a flat plain to the west and a water fall opposite. Roads from east and north are good, but those from south and west should be avoided as they are used by Deut *moong* (fever devil). If there is a tree to the north directly below the house it should never be cut down; if, however, there is one to the south directly above it, it should be cut, or, if it be too big to cut down, a knife or some other piece of iron should be stuck into it. If the earth on which the

[8] See Chapter Nine. It is probable that millet was historically the earlier crop: what I question is the date of the introduction of dry rice.

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house is built is soft the house-mother will die. It is bad if there is not a hill between the north and the east because you will get the wind. 342 777

'*Choten* and *Mani* ('Mani walls' and prayer flags) should never be placed to the east or the inhabitants of the house will die, they should be on the north and west. It is good if the hill behind be covered with trees. It is bad to have a red cliff behind to the south; people born in the year of the Horse or the year of the Snake will be particularly troubled. (This can be averted by elaborate ceremonies.)

'It is bad if there is standing water below the house which will reflect the light; if there is, gold, silver and copper should be put in the water. It is bad if water seeps through the ground below the house, above it does not matter. It is bad if there is a cave to the north or west; for that would be the home of Mamoo *moong* (a malevolent female devil). It is bad to be below a pass between two hills, with a land slip below you, this is a devil's road. It is bad if there is a juniper tree (*sanden koong*) to the west, . . . etc.'

When an intending builder has chosen a site which fulfils these general desiderata, he has still to find out whether that site will be propitious for him personally. To do this he digs up a small piece of earth from the intended site, concentrating fixedly all the time on the question of whether the ground is good-omened or not, [787] and takes it to a competent lama[9] who will then consult the book *Tong-yoop* and cast a horoscope to see if the site is suitable in relation to the intending builder's horoscope, reckoned by the various year-cycles.[10] If the first site chosen is not propitious others must be looked for until a suitable one is found. It consequently follows that all other considerations are secondary; it is better to be near a stream (for water for domestic use and also in case of fire) and to have suitable ground near for a field-garden, and, if possible, to be near friends and relations; but the verdict of the lamas comes first.

When the site is finally determined upon the lama carefully 342 replaces the sample of earth, and then offers *cherkem*—that is mixed grains floating in strained *chi*—which is thrown on to the ground

[9] In Lingthem only Tafoor and the two Dorjé Lapoon knew how to cast this horoscope; the Lharibu Chujen of Panung was the only lama in the [787] neighbourhood to possess or be able to read Sachet Zai Putta.

[10] See Chapter Seven, pp. 209–212) and Appendix III.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these 848
gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth.

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it 847
is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards 848
in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only [842]
abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu.

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and 848
relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *p:so*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; [753]
either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of 848
them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15] 777

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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my figures may be incomplete on this subject; young children have little emotional importance for Lepchas and dead ones, other than the recently dead, may easily be forgotten.

On the figures available it seems doubtful if the Lepchas of Zongu will be able to maintain their numbers in the future. Out of a total population of 176 in Lingthem, there are twenty girls (who will probably marry outside the village) and ten boys under the age of ten and eighteen boys and eleven girls between the ages of eleven and twenty. At the other end of the scale there are thirty-seven people (or a fifth of the total population) aged fifty or over, including three men and one woman of over eighty.

The Lepchas account for the presence or absence of children chiefly as a matter of luck and the results of former incarnations; there is however a myth accounting for the relatively small size of the Lepcha family as compared with the Nepali; the Lepchas they say have only seven ancestral supernaturals,[18] the Nepalis twelve. I have no complete figures for any of the other villages in Zongu but such information as I received, and such observations as I was able to make, seem to indicate a similar situation throughout the whole reserve. I think the psychological reasons given by Rivers for the breakdown in fertility among the Melanesians, supposing them to be an adequate explanation of the situation there, are inapplicable in Zongu.

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Of the forty-one married couples in Lingthem (the other nineteen married women are either co-wives or widows) fifteen were childless in the spring of 1937. Eight of these couples were young people recently married, who still had hopes of bearing children; four of them were old people living alone who had no longer any hope of children; the remaining three had adopted boys. There are also six adult men in Lingthem who were adopted as children.

The arrangements for adopting a child[19] vary according to whether the child is the son of a near relation, of an unrelated person, or an orphan. With a nearly related person the adoption is conducted with little formality; the adopting parents present the real parents with a milch-cow and a new dress for the mother: these

[18] The people of Mayel: see Chapter Nine.

[19] The adopted child is called *kup-tsop*—substitute child—and the adopting parents are called *jiut-bo* and *jiut-mu*; the adopted child addresses them as *abo* and *amu*—father and mother.

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000 essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

771 The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand,
779 collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a
756 good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have
787 stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid
● 777 excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

756 Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men
771 flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands
779 a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and
787 also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a
[824] hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

SEX, MARRIAGE AND MATURITY

i

On the question of attaining sexual maturity the Lepchas differentiate between men and women far more overtly than they do in any other phase of the life cycle. Theoretically they ignore physical puberty, have no word or words to express it, and pay no sort of formal attention to its arrival. With males the achievement of full sexual potency is considered to be a slow maturing process, taking place automatically over a period of years, with actual puberty marking, as it were, a half-way stage; though most boys produce emissions from about the age of fifteen, they are not considered to have achieved full potency till from three to five years later. With women, on the other hand, the physical signs of puberty—the beginning of menses and the swelling of the breasts—are believed only to occur through the external influence either of a man or of a supernatural named Kandoo *moong*. It is thought that normally a virgin girl will not menstruate nor will her breasts swell; these physical alterations only take place after copulation. It does, however, occasionally—though, it is thought, rarely—happen that a virgin starts menstruating; this indicates a visit of the supernatural Kandoo *moong*, and is considered to be a sign of good luck; some of the older women boasted that they had thus been signalled by this supernatural. The majority of women, however, depend on the intervention of a man; the physical signs will start whenever a girl experiences copulation, and there is therefore no stigma attached to grown men forcing little girls of nine or ten, and this does occur occasionally. It is possible that this cultural explanation of physiological processes masks a deep-seated male envy of the more conspicuous and dramatic life-giving functions of women and an attempt to make them appear dependent on male intervention. It would seem that this notion is at the base of the initiatory rites in many tribes of New Guinea and Australia, where

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husband for some months before he had assembled enough food for the ceremony. The ceremony only took place for one day instead of for two and the bride and her party went straight away on arrival into the house. The day before the marriage the bride withdrew to a village one day's walk away instead of to her own home which was three days away, where she met her bridal party. After the ceremony the post-nuptial visits were curtailed, but it was considered improper for the newly married couple to start living at home at once and so they spent a few days at the house of his 'nephew' Tingkep. 585 587

Early in the morning after the marriage feast the bride and groom, together with the bride's party and two friends of the groom to carry the heads and legs of the oxen, set out on a return visit to the bride's house. When they have arrived the groom stops as little time as possible; overnight if the bride's home is some way away, otherwise not even that. On that day all the guests who were present at the marriage feast return with gifts of crops or *chi*, which they give according to their wish and ability as a help towards the very considerable expense of the marriage feast. 585

Two weeks later the groom goes to fetch his bride again. Either at this visit or at the subsequent one the girl's father provides a feast for the newly married couple. When the bride and groom leave the girl's house her father sends back as a present to the man's father a load of *chi* and a load of rice. The couple then stop a week in the husband's house; at the end of that time they go back to the girl's house, taking with them as presents to the girl's parents from the groom's parents exactly the same presents as the girl herself had brought. The couple then spend a few days at the bride's home and then finally return to the groom's. At this final removal the girl brings with her such private property as she may possess in the shape of animals or harvested grain as well as her clothes and jewels.

Some time during the first year of marriage the bride may go to visit her parents with a present of a pig and they will in return give her a milch cow or a heifer. This does not always take place, usually only if the bride's parents are relatively rich.

If the horoscopes of the married pair are unfavourable or if ill-luck is foretold, this ill-luck can be temporarily averted in the following way: two lamas will make small millet images of the husband and wife called *parr-ko* and into these the lamas will transfer all the ill-luck which is foreseen in the sacred books. When 585 777

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585 this is done the husband and wife must each carry away their
777 own image and throw it into the forest. The cost of this service is either Rs. 3 a head or enough grain for two months. This ceremony, however, only postpones the ill-luck for two or three years, after which it must be repeated.

585 As can be seen, these spaced visits are carefully arranged to make the bride's severance from her family as gentle as possible. It is only very exceptionally, as in the case of Nariya described above, that after the marriage ceremony the bride will refuse to return to her husband's house. It is also worth noting that until well after the ceremony the parents of the children being married play no rôle whatsoever.

The marriage feast represents very considerable expense—if everything had to be bought somewhere between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300; for most people this entails saving up for a couple of years. Nearly everybody who can provides this feast; in the case of very poor people general contributions will be made such as were outlined in Chapter Six.[7] In the case of a *komok myok*—that is a man living with his wife's family and taking the place of the non-existent son—the feast is very much smaller and is chiefly provided by the girl's family.

iv

602 The newly married girl is likely to find herself in a somewhat
592 subservient position; it is her task to do the cooking and most of the household chores under the direction of the 'house mother', who is almost always her mother-in-law. She also has to maintain constantly respectful behaviour towards her father-in-law and the other men—her husband's elder brothers and her husband's father's brothers if they live in the house—who are so classified. If her husband is not the youngest brother she will only have this subservient position until the younger brothers marry; then their wives in their turn will occupy the position of youngest daughter-in-law and have to do the greater part of the household work. There is usually considerable friendliness between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; the daughter-in-law is taking a lot of work off her mother-in-law's shoulders and in return the mother-in-law instructs her and cajoles her to keep her happy.

574 There is no bar on the girl paying relatively frequent visits to her parents; she need not necessarily be accompanied by her

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 156.

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755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however,
[787] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,
					1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

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751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
932 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
● 777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

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who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced 751
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of 777
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [531]
of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

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751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
● 777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

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It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342
care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361
sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777
all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778]
to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

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342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken" or
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is good.
● 777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

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these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

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When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time 243 he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; [777] otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early 243 September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the 535 district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not 786 present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

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868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has [177] struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's [787] ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had [534] instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of [373] small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

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346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [384] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch ●778 is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the

[788] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

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wall on their right side (as must be done for all lamaist holy places or objects) turning the prayer wheels as they come up to them. 346 778

The chief holy place is a large bare room, occupying almost the whole of the ground floor of the building. The interior of the room is empty except for four supporting pillars in the middle of the floor, and two slightly raised seats running in parallel lines from the altar to the door on which the lamas sit during ceremonies. In the centre of the back wall is the altar, inset in a carved wooden frame; on it are three large images, Sangyi Youbami in the centre, flanked by Gamyang Kanché Rimbuché and Chérézi; in front of these larger images are four smaller gods. On either side of the altar are worked wooden pigeon-holes, in which are kept the hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyour, one of the two Tibetan scriptures. These volumes consist of loose leaves bound up in a cloth and fastened between two plain pieces of wood as bindings. Scattered about the room are the various musical instruments which are not in use—drums, gongs and cymbals; the metal instruments similar to trumpets and clarionets, the conch shells and the flutes made out of a human femur are kept either on or before the altar. Every morning at dawn a *kané* (sacristan) places on the altar before the images seven bowls of water for the gods to drink and wash in; every evening at sunset these bowls are emptied and replaced by *chimi*—altar lights, consisting of a small metal container with a wick of bamboo or cloth, filled with melted butter or oil. There also stands on the altar a copper jug containing blessed water (*tyü*) and usually a pair of vases filled with flowers. There are also occasional offerings of cones of ground grain. During important festivals the front of the altar is completely hidden by elaborate constructions, chiefly made out of dough and butter which represent those gods who are being specially worshipped. Anybody approaching this or any other lamaist altar for the first time is meant to prostrate himself three times, standing with joined hands, falling to the knees and then touching the ground with the forehead. After these prostrations no special attention is paid to the altar, and it is quite permissible to turn one's back on it. [779] [534]

To the west of the main room, with a separate entrance also on the north wall, is the *lha-gong*. This is a high and narrow chamber almost entirely filled with four huge prayer wheels, reaching up to the ceiling; indeed the first and biggest of the wheels, which is called Betsa Guru, pierces the ceiling and its top, a cone

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346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically ●778 touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused [783 cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark 785] chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A [778] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber 289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

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532 detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

778 All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are 532 made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives 412 are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge [439] and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

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site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

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Consequently the recognised habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter—so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

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favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 614
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank 823
copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which [754
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots 824]
of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to
be rubbed over the body.

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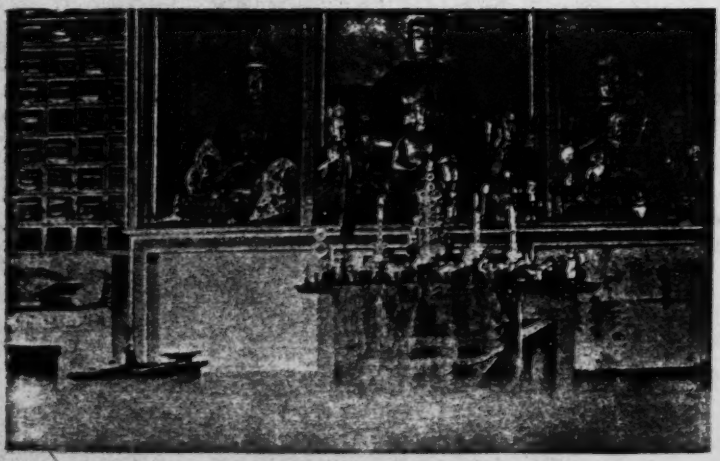

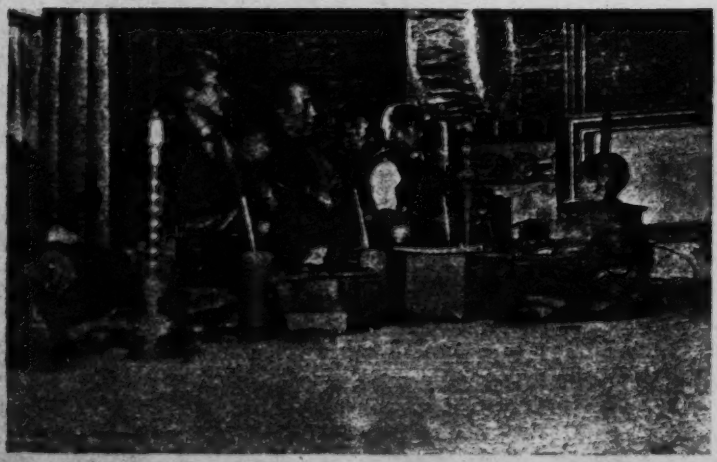

Above: THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below: THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *patyoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

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793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

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796 year. There are actually only forty-two householders for twenty-four feasts, but some of the richer households or those which consist of more than one working family give the feasts by themselves. The feasts for Guru Rimpuché are provided by lamas, those for Kinchenjunga by laymen. The duration of the ceremony depends upon the amount of food and drink provided; if the feast is plentiful, it may last thirty-six hours, starting at sunset on the preceding evening and continuing till the following dawn; if the feast is a poor one it will only last during the daylight hours of the day of ceremony.

In essentials the ceremonies are all similar. An altar-piece—its elaboration depending on the size of the festival—is fabricated by the competent lamas out of a variety of materials, of which the chief are flour mixed to a paste, butter either white or coloured and occasionally coloured threads. The ground-work ●778 of the altar pieces are blocks of wood, usually flat for Guru 796 Rimpuché and raised in five mounds (thrones) for Kinchenjunga. On these are placed more-or-less life-like dough images of the chief gods, surrounded by innumerable and almost shapeless cones to represent the minor gods and attendants and satellites. Round the image of Kinchenjunga are represented the hundred gods which inhabit the body of the donor of the feast. Those dough images are decorated with white and coloured butter to represent their clothes and jewels. Sometimes a 'halo' shaped like an arum leaf is placed behind the chief gods; the halo consists of elaborate and very pretty flower decorations made in coloured butter on tin shields. Occasionally the altar-piece is surmounted by small dough birds fixed on thin splinters of bamboo; or alternatively there is added to the monastery altars materials which are practically always used in private and personal ceremonies: a *deu* or 'palace of supernaturals' consisting of elaborate geometrical shapes in coloured thread fastened round a central bamboo; and splinters with tufts of wool stuck at odd intervals down their length which are called *pong* and which are considered to represent the clouds which surround the homes of the supernaturals. Always before the commencement of the preparation of the altar-piece a small cone is made to represent Gett'r *moong*, the demon of quarrels. The quarrel demon is first invoked and then destroyed in order to prevent quarrelling or evil words taking place during the ensuing ceremony and feast.

796 When the altar is prepared the musicians start playing in twos and threes and big groups. If the altar has been made the night

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Even for a Lepcha Gongyop is preternaturally shy and I had to woo him very assiduously before he would talk to me. But I found with him as I did with others that once his confidence was gained he was willing to talk absolutely without reserve. Indeed one day I had to run away from him because I had asked him a question about his divining necklace; he explained in great distress that if he told anybody the full details about it he would loose all the power of divining through it, so please would I not ask him. I changed the subject, but naturally curious, kept glancing at the necklace, and after a little he started to tell me about it. A similar dilemma arose three or four times with Lepchas; it would seem as though once they had accepted you they can neither lie nor prevaricate, and will tell secrets which they will bitterly regret mentioning later. Towards the end of our relationship Gongyop asked me very shyly (for it was, in a way, a confession of failure for a Mun) for medicine for sores: and then he showed me on his shoulder a growth which to my unpractised eye looked like cancer.

Gongyop was the youngest of four children; almost as soon as he was weaned he was adopted by the younger brother of his paternal grandmother in whose house he spent the greater part of his life; recently however he has returned to look after his blind old father. His eldest brother, who was a lama, died with his wife and two of his children in a dysentery epidemic; his two surviving children are Sangkyar, a cretinous defective, and Satéo, who is lame and rather silly. The next brother is Thyak Thimbu; he too is a Mun (he has the paternal spirit, Gongyop the maternal); after him came a sister, now dead, who was married, first to a 'brother' of Dunbi, and then to Kurma. Gongyop became a Padem twenty years ago, the spirit descending to him from his father's maternal uncle who died five years before the possession; he became a Mun five years ago, the spirit descending from his mother's elder sister who died ten years before the possession.

'At the time of the onset of the illness which showed the possession of Padem I had been married for five years and my wife was pregnant; she was later delivered of a still-born daughter. Subsequently we had a son who is still living. I was taken very ill, so ill that I could not eat or drink *chi* or move or even go out of the house to relieve myself; I felt as though I was bound with ropes. After another Mun had recognised the spirit which was possessing me I recovered quickly and was then able to perform all the rituals of which Padem are capable. There is no need of a teacher for the

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764 grave and should not be touched. When all is in place the four ropes are pulled away simultaneously. The Mun then ceremoniously cleanses the hands of the buriers with a pot of strained *chi* and a bristle brush.

For disposal by water all the early preparations are the same except that a lama goes with the burial party and before the body is put into the river offers *cherkem*—that is strained *chi* with grain floating in it—to the supernaturals of the water. The basket is put into the water first and then the body, head downwards; it is pushed out with a forked stick under the arm-pits and floats away. In the case of a small child the body and the basket are thrown away without any sort of ceremony. No gifts are put in the grave or thrown into the river; the corpse has merely its new cloth and the basket. In all forms of disposal of the body the knees are fastened to the body by a cloth.

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After the disposal of the corpse there are still two actions which must be performed: the getting rid of the devil which has caused the death and the safe conducting of the dead man's soul well out of the world. The order in which these are performed depends on whether the horoscope has divined that the death is caused by Sandé *moong*, or by Shidook *moong* or by Arot *moong* (death by violence). If the death has been caused by Sandé *moong* the disinfecting ceremony is performed immediately after the removal of the corpse and before the *sanglion*—that is to say the speeding of the dead man's soul; the other ceremonies are performed about two months after death.

764 778 To remove Sandé *moong* the presence of two lamas is necessary, one to read the sacred books and one to perform the necessary actions. On a rectangular board they construct out of powdered grain and water a life-sized Cat with a very long tail with a horse's saddle on its back and a relatively smaller rider on it; in front are two more men, behind two more. Three triple strands of coloured thread are put round the Cat's neck, one of which is held by the rider and the others by the two men in front. These images are decorated with various sacred and symbolical devices made out of wood and thread and there are offerings of crops. Besides this object, one big and two smaller torches are prepared and also some heaps of small pebbles and dried buckwheat powder, mixed with rotted bamboo (here called 'dust').

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764 palaces'.[3] In front of all these is placed a special plate of pottery made with nine handles; this is left empty. The ceremonial is the same as for Sandé *moong*.

If the deceased has met his death by violence, that is through Arot *moong*, the ceremony of Tikar Sangyour has to be performed. After a death by violence has occurred in a family the descendants should keep up the ceremony yearly for ever, for violent death is infectious and hereditary; it can also be performed apotropaically. The path by which a corpse, who has died violently, has been carried should be avoided; and at the *sanglion* of such people no raw meat is given, but only cooked meat, as raw meat will carry the infection. Tafoor performs this ceremony because his grandfather fell from a height and was drowned; so do Ongden, Nariya, the Mandal (although in his case this is precautionary) and many others.

764 On a block of wood one large and four small images of a horse with a rider are made of millet powder coloured red. In front of
● 778 this is a black image of the female supernatural Mamoo *moong*, and in front of her an inflated animal's bladder. In front of this again is a *chimi* and at the four corners are four pots containing respectively scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison, and water from five rivers. There are also small offerings of grain and various decorations. While the special sacred book is being read *cherkem* is offered. When the offering is carried out a torch is laid down on top of it facing in the same direction; on top of this are placed leaves of wormwood and a stone on top of that.

766 In the case of a child dying before the age of about ten none of the ceremonies described above are performed nor is a *sanglion* made for it. Instead of these the ceremony of Dek Flee is performed by a Mun three days after death. For this ceremony a goat is required and also a tray covered with a black cloth on which is put samples of every sort of grain and a bundle of seven pieces of wood tied up with reed; besides that a bundle of elephant grass and other prickly plants are needed. The ceremony is performed inside the house.

The goat is tethered to a pole and a second rope made out of reed with three knots in it is tied round the goat's neck. This the Mun and all the members of the household in turn touch, and then the Mun throws the rope forward out of the house door three times. If by any chance the knot should point inwards there will be another

[3] Thirteen, being an odd number, is lucky.

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death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some 766
firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *péks* the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*tiklyong-kup*) is set up [831]
between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time.

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* 764
all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*.

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the 764
dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn 778
a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 loops on the circumference[4] and NI in Tibetan script inscribed in the middle. On this is set a bamboo *patyoot* about a cubit high
778 and a little broader than that usually employed for *chi* drinking, with a rupee in the bottom and filled with grain; into this is stuck an upright bamboo of the height of the corpse when sitting and at shoulder height is an inserted cross-piece the width of the dead person's shoulders. On top of this is placed a piece of paper supported on a square stretcher: this is stamped with a die representing a divine face; it is the same for all ages and conditions, but different for each sex; it is inscribed with the name of the dead person. Then this dummy is clothed with the clothes of the dead person so arranged as to look as if it was sitting with the legs crossed and feet hidden and hands folded. A big scarf which has to be borrowed or bought for the occasion is draped from the image's behind up the back and over the face, so that the paper mask is hidden.

This image is placed in the *dé-ong* facing the lamas, who sit on the right of the altar; in front of the image are three tables. On the first table are seven small cones of rice, seven *chimi*, two pots of water and two pots of rice; on the second table is a plate and cup and all sorts of food; on the third are the dead person's jewels, if it was a woman, or the knife and bow-and-arrows if a man. A little to the left before the first table is a *patyoot* of *chi*; behind and also to the left must sit the Mourner—the surviving spouse if there is one, or failing that any near relation. The Mourner only has to be present when the image is given food or talked to. Except right at the end other ordinary people do not come into the *dé-ong*.

764 If the dead man was a lama all the lamas of the neighbourhood will come automatically; if he was a layman only two are necessary, a Dorjé Lapoon and a *kané*. Old and experienced men are allowed to sit with the lamas. A certain number of nuns with their prayer-wheels are necessary; they sit against the wall opposite the altar.

[556] The length of the ceremony depends on the wealth of the deceased. If he was a poor man it will only last twenty-four hours; if he was rich, up to seven days. The *chi* offered to the corpse is changed three times daily, the food twice; each meal must have some meat in it and also tea, rice and all vegetable foods. When the meal

[4] There would seem to be a connection between this nine-looped circle, and the nine-handled cup used in the ritual to expel Shidook *moong*, but I could not learn what this connection is.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Care of youngest child, born 1934.

After the mother's death Kurma's mother-in-law nursed the baby; although the child is in her fourth year she is still giving her a little milk. No medicines are needed to be given; the baby sucks and that produces the milk flow. His mother-in-law is forty-six years old but has not produced a child for several years. Kurma complains that his life is very hard as he has nobody to help him since his mother-in-law is feeble. His nephew is irresponsible and is constantly going away. 159x

Third wife.

Six months after the death of his second wife he met his third wife, who lives at Hi. He slept with her three times and she became pregnant and he did *aśék* for her immediately after the memorial service for his second wife. A son was born in September 1936. Kurma says that two other men wanted to marry her but his wife preferred him. He hopes to be able to bring her home in the autumn of 1938.

iv

March 18th to May 20th.

JOURNAL OF KURMA'S ACTIONS AND OBITER DICTA

March 18th.

Recognised Kurma as a personality for the first time. He gave details of several exorcisms.

March 19th.

Kurma came to fetch us to conduct us to the *aśék* of Chano's eldest son, at his house about a thousand feet down the valley. On the way down he pointed out a tree which was the home of the deut *moong*—fever devil. This devil has been seen and looks like a man covered with long hair. [778]

Kurma also talked about '*ingzong*' and said he had two in the neighbourhood. He said that one reason for establishing '*ingzong*' is because you love one another. Such a relationship is not established after a quarrel; should such an event occur a third party will give a big meal and try to reconcile the two quarrellers. [608]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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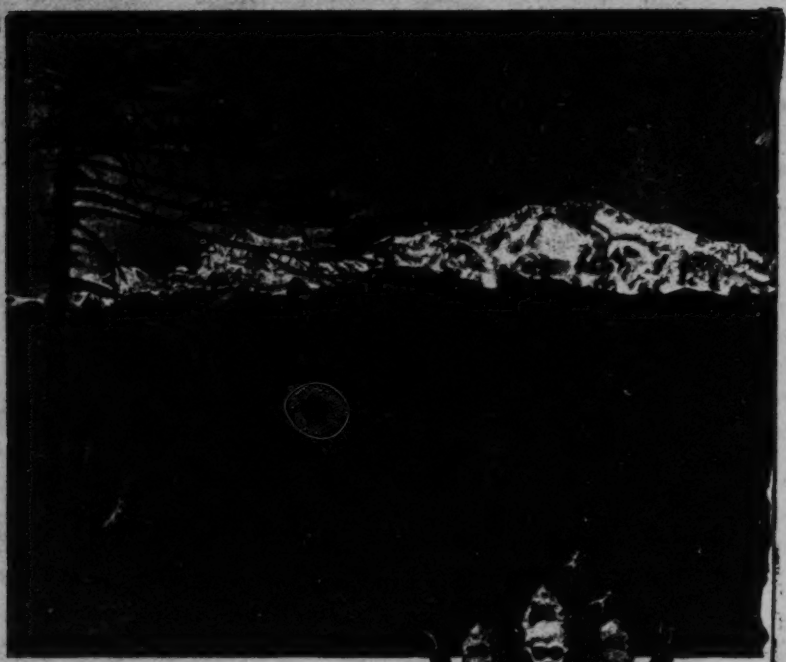

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Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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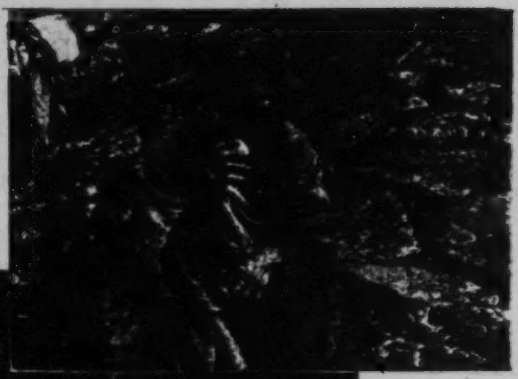

The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyen and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand [415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind. [231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000 unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114 the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793 Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346 two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822] it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778] altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373 away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782] either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopōn, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather
startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange
projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at
every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for
it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number.
It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I
had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the
English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical
with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several
fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen,
which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of
ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks'
feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon
designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams
above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded
me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pan-
tomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de
Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was
put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep,
was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly
gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning
we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-
bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its
solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to
exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to 175
have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin 532
mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost 175
bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured 778
in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons. These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy 778
worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure 842
for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
[212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792

Lingtem Monastery.

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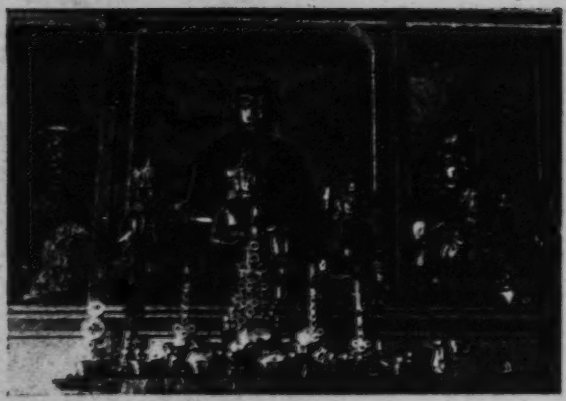
Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *tormas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Guru Rimpoche.



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Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

[Facing p. 72]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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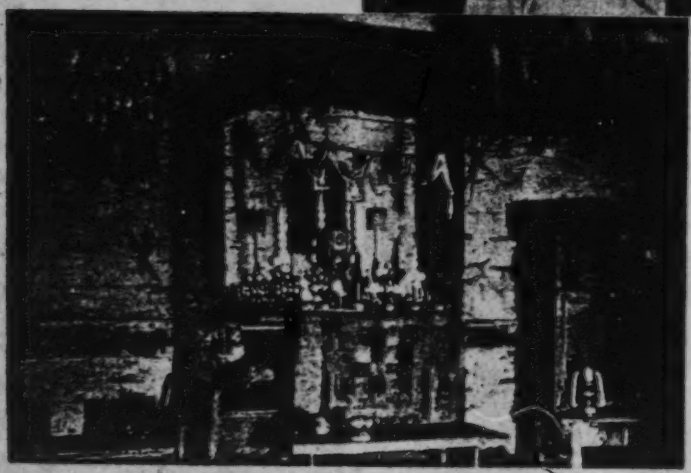

[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with
whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook,
and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the
house. No arrangements have so far been made for her
marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner
during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age.
He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him
do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons
would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of
devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and
even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after
dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the
time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru
Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and
would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his
wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the
least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom
he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was
sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books.
After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. - Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chōtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
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415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was
755 given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*[1] which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from
[178] time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer
[22] sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

[1] [i.e., dough cones.—Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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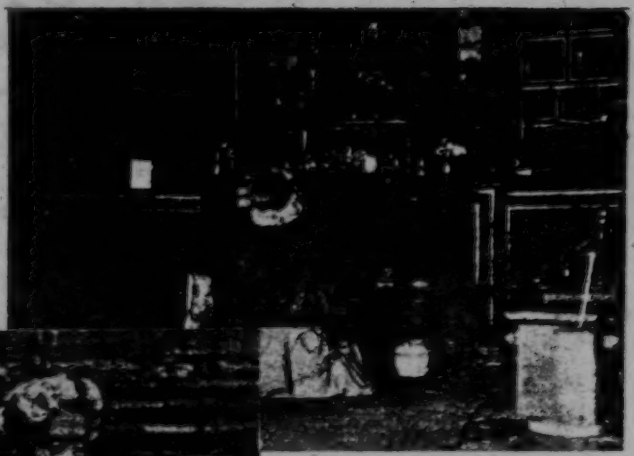

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

[778]

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[facing p. 124]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

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755 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

● 778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

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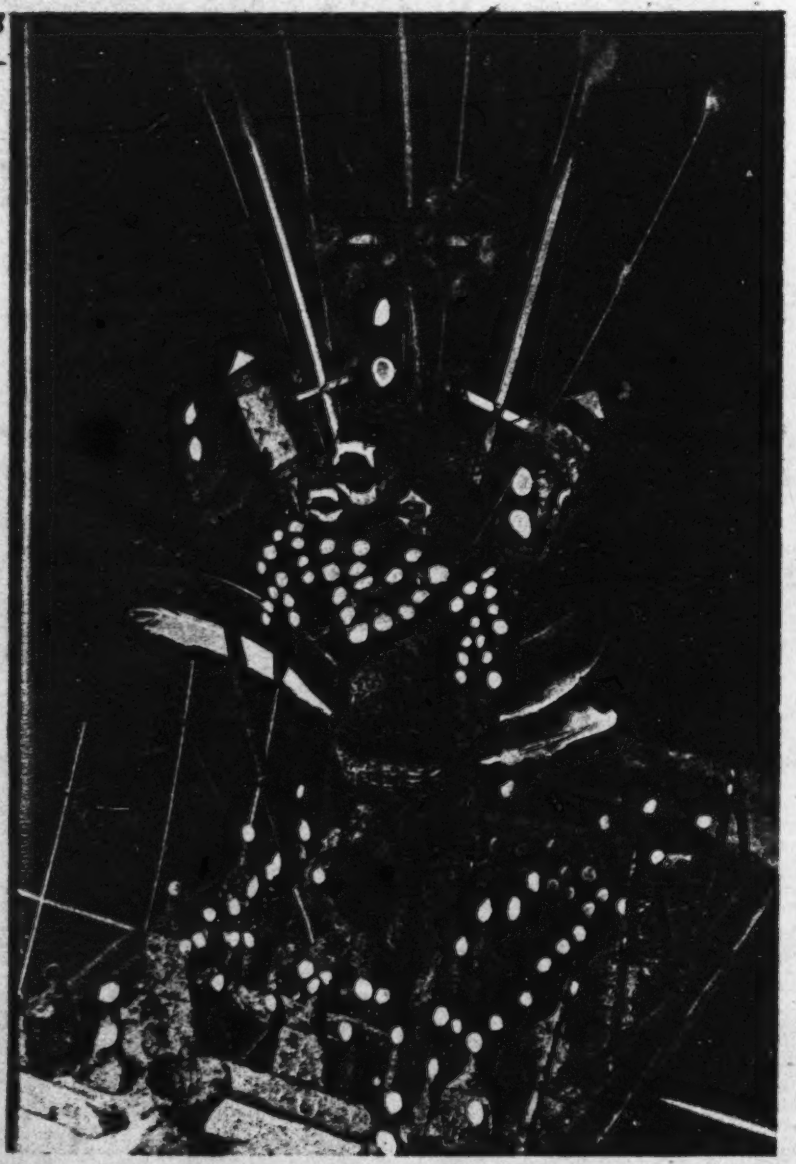

A completed *Ga-sum*.

[Facing p. 130]

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THE TRIMMINGS

778 775 The following list reads something like a recipe in a cookery book. Its understanding, however, is not essential; and anyone who finds such things as "Mrs. Beeton" dull may skip this paragraph and proceed direct to the story.

Having completed the figure of the Go-sum, take the following:

Lukor Chu-Ni; twelve. These are small *torma*, about two inches in height, pressed out flat and stamped with a design in flour. They represent the separate years of the Tibetan twelve-year cycle.

Tako; four. These are miniature cups of dough. They are filled with *chi*, after which bits of raw meat are added.

Chumi; one. A *chumi* is the ordinary Lepcha word for a lamp. This miniature one is made of dough, as is its wick. It cannot therefore be lighted.

Gyachen Diji; four of these are required. These are small *torma* with spreading bases, and represent the gods of the four directions. One is placed at each corner of the figure.

Par Chongo: one. This is a long strip of dough, rather like a thin and elongated sausage. It has a design pressed upon it in flour and represents the animals, birds, and insects that live entirely on dry land.

Sa Julgu: one. This is similar to the *Par Chongo* but rather shorter in length. It represents snakes, fish, toads and all other such creatures as live in water or under rocks.

Chongbu Tip-gyu: to taste. These are small twists of dough and look like cigars that have been ill treated. They are used for waving over people. Four or five is the usual number.

Diget: twelve. These are small ordinary *tormas* and represent the demons and gods who live in the human world.

Gyukar Nger-get: fourteen. These are double *tormas*, joined together in pairs. They represent old men and women, and are the servants of the Go-sum. The sexes are not distinguished.

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778 *Dungay:* nine. Ordinary small *tormas*, which represent the
755 stewards who control the servants.

Sunghliyu: one. A small pointed stick painted red. This is stuck in front and to the right of the figure. It represents its sword.

Thum Shing: two. These are small wooden labels. One is for women, the other for men. They are identical in shape and size; but the male has a design of crosses, thus: × × / × ×; and the female is marked like this: # # / # #. These labels are said to represent all the people of the inhabited world. The female is placed on the right, the male on the left.

Pung: six. Small sticks representing spinning rods, and hence women.

Chong: six. Thin bamboo slivers representing arrows, and hence men.

The *Pung* and *Chong* are arranged round the figure so as to form a fence. The arrows are on the right, the spinning rods on the left.

Yay: three. A large red one for the bull; a smaller blue one for the pig; yellow for the tiger.

Yay are used in every Lamaist ceremony other than those of a purely religious nature. They vary in size from elaborate erections, some ten feet in height, to the small ones required for the present ceremony, which are only about ten inches high. The *yay* is an arrangement of bamboo masts, on which is built up a geometrical pattern in twine of various colours. The colours and actual arrangement of the strings vary with different ceremonies. Some of them are extremely complicated and take many hours to make. Tafoor said that a great part of his later instruction was confined to the making of *yays*. As it is he now knows how to make many different kinds and carries all the details in his head. It is said that complete instructions for the making of *yays* have been placed on record, but in Lingtem no one possessed a copy of the book.

The *yay* is a sort of devil-trap or house. As soon as a demon

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is expelled or summoned it sees the "house" which has been 778
newly made in its honour and settles there in preference to a 755
human habitation. Having entered it becomes entangled in the arrangement of strings and can then be taken with the offering and thrown away. Simple-minded demons can be trapped with a simple kind of *yay:* some, however, are not so silly and can only be caught in an elaborate arrangement that looks like a series of concentric spiders' webs inside several intertwined triangles. It is well known what sort of *yay* is required to catch any particular demon; and it seems that the latter never learn sense.

The three heads of the Go-sum are coloured respectively red, blue, and yellow to match the *yay* which is stuck behind the neck of each.

Gyong-bo: six. These are thin bamboo slivers with tufts of wool at the top and at intervals down their length. They represent *Tarchuk*, or prayer-flags for the living.

When these things have been arranged round the Go-sum the whole is garnished with leaves, brambles and flowers in season. A handful of assorted grain is sprinkled over it, and all is then complete. It is now taken and placed on the ground in front of the altar, after which the ceremony proceeds. The one Tafoor made for me took him the best part of one whole day; and while he was doing it he told me the following story:

THE STORY

There was once a god named Hla-Chongbu-Gadjen, whose 539
second daughter was in the habit of stealing flowers, the property of other gods. Because of this she was expelled from heaven and sent to live in the world. In due course she was reborn in Nepal, at a place called Pe-Yu Chorten.* Little of the girl's early life is known except that she was an orphan, and was taken into the household of the Maharaja of Nepal.

* This is Tibetan and merely means "(the place of) the Tibetan Chorten." A chorten is a Buddhist tope, or stupa. It is usually in the form of a huge dome.

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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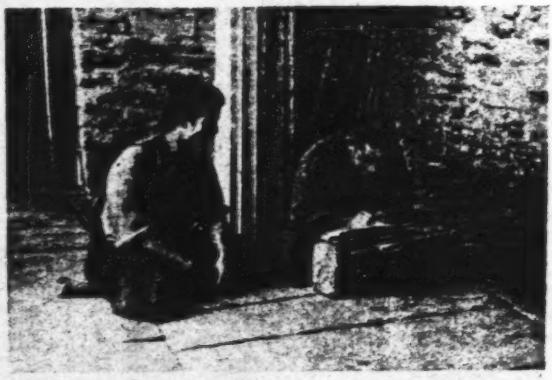
Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."



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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[FACING p. 146]

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the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

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and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and constructed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

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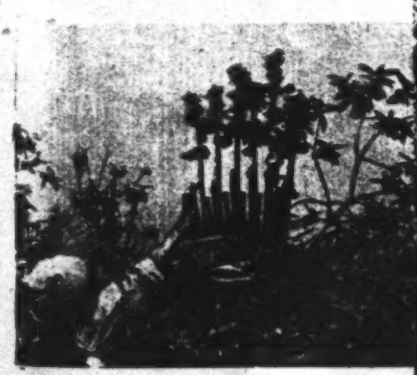
[793]

Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Chorim* ceremony.

[778]

The *Gado*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gado*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →



The *Rum* in position, showing the line of *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks.

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796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was [865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning ● 778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form of *Yay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a [776] house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

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several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517]
roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning
Sing-Song voice.

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It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342
care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361
sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777
all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778]
to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

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521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of [313] course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

778 it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the 356 335 house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

352 There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. 354 The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the 415 cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and 323 I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was 251 told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked 353 against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for [721] pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

[312] Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in 251 copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. 415 These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

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249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
177 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
178 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

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[249] It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
173 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

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587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 177 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 787 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

● 778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 373 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

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796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at
533 intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight
789 the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the
778 day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a separate name. It was found that the entire company 796
could not be accommodated on the *Pong Rum* itself, so the 778
overflow was arranged on a brass tray, which the Lamas, however, later forgot about and never put on the altar. In the centre of the *Pong Rum* and immediately in front of the central cone was a yak's head (*Yok thyak*) made of dough, but nobody seemed to know its significance. The preparation of the entire offering took four men roughly five hours. At the end of the ceremony it will be broken up and eaten; but the men who have made it are not allowed to taste it, which seems unjust. This morning the whole thing was brought out of the monastery and each of the five main cones further embellished by the addition of a sort of tin cape on which a design was built up in butter coloured bright red, blue, yellow and green. The whole thing now looks like the sweets served on Lloyd-Triestino liners and is, I should imagine, equally unpalatable. It was now taken inside and placed on a table in front of the altar, immediately in front of the central figure of Guru Rimpoche. Later on, bowls of water and several lighted lamps were put down in front of it, and a jar of incense was lighted at one side.

There was the usual periodic chanting, like bees swarm- 796
ing, alternating with the usual bursts of music, and the actual ceremony did not appear to be different from that of the 21st, although to the initiated the order of the service was doubtless completely different.

About midday a small table was brought out and placed on the grass in front of the monastery. A bowl of *sher-kem*, the special ceremonial *chi* with maize and other grain floating in it, was placed on this, together with a large brass tray containing a number of small *tormas*. A young novice now came and stood by the table, took up one of the *tormas* in a spoon, and dipped it in the mixture. Having done this he held the spoon out at arm's length until there was what I can only describe as a musical orgasm inside the building, when he threw it from him with a shout of *loch!* whereupon

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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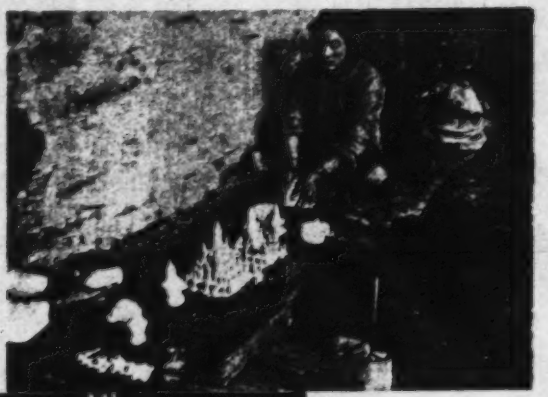
[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.



[533
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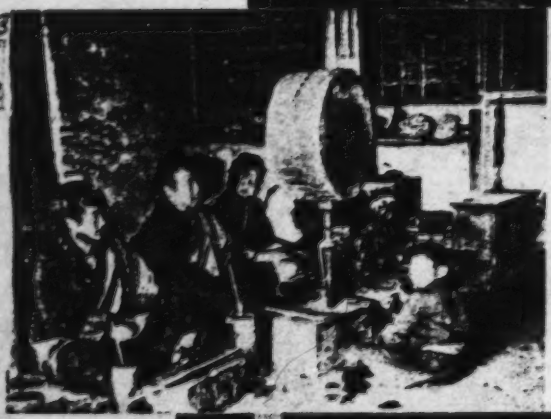

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
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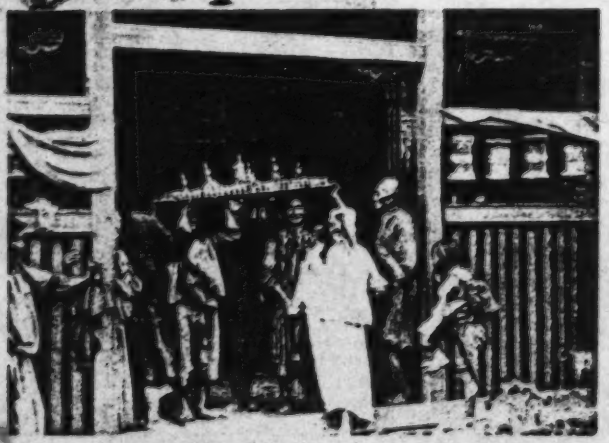
At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.



[Facing p. 274]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[facing p.275]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 15

Return to Civilisation

24th May:

SEVERAL Lamas spent the night in the monastery so as to be ready for the *Boom Kor* ceremony, which starts at dawn to-morrow. The *Boom Kor* consists in carrying the sacred books, together with a small image of Guru Rimpoche, all round the village. In Jongu this is done once a year, but in other parts of Sikkim twice; its purpose is to keep away sickness, and it may be compared with the old English custom of Beating the Bounds. 796

Banging of drums and trumpet-playing started punctually at four a.m., after which there was no more sleep for me, and continued at intervals until the procession formed up at about half-past seven and started to move off. Each book was wrapped in yellow silk and carried by a woman, every household in the village being thus represented. The image of Guru Rimpoche was carried by a Lama on a small cushion of yellow, white and blue cloth: another Lama carried a large bell-like contraption, made of the same materials, on a long pole. This represented the god's umbrella. Yet another priest carried a small pot of holy water: this also was adorned with a "ballet skirt" of yellow, white and blue. 796 778

The procession went via Ongden's house, and the upper part of the village to Tingkep's house, where the first halt was made and refreshment served. We arrived there at about eight-thirty to find the reading in full swing. No one seemed to be in charge, and each Lama seemed to be reading more or less on his own; but it was obvious that many of them could not read and were merely repeating by heart such bits of the scriptures as they happened to know. 796

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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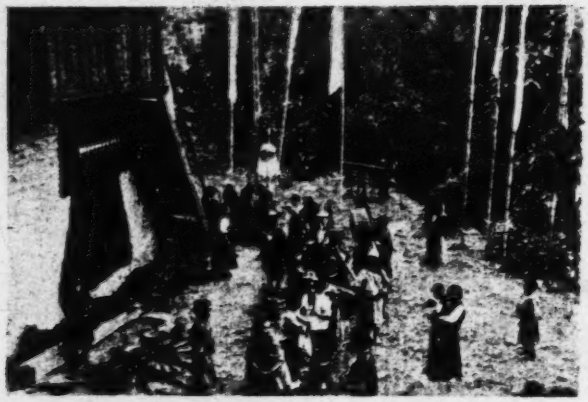

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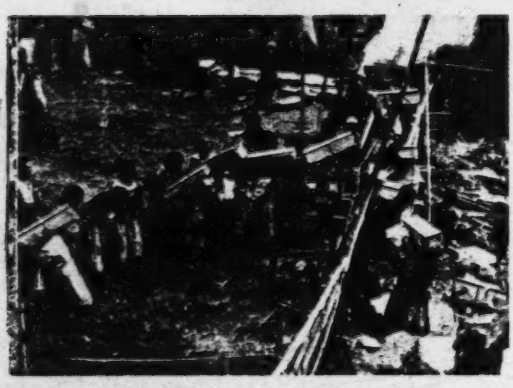

The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

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Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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The return of the *Boom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
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Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[FACING p.291]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5
Tibet AJ1

Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ôngge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18] T L 171

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bón, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now. L 177 771 796

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace". L 796 778

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there L 796

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
796 and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
776 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
778 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
778 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bŏn religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
775 possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*. 796 778 171

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bŏn terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bŏn priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28] 796 171

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bŏn flowers" is mentioned in Bŏn scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bŏn origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

796 778 776

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Analyst]

796 *rum* by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base
778 a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The
776 image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

796 As in the first rite,[1] the number nine plays an important
601 part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

796 Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder
776 supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having
778 nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 72. - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings ; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *looh lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yeu*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yeu*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *looh lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yeu*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yeu* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned
776 before ; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
777 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
776 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that
778 besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
1511 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a
778 tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way :

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from [787]
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which
was recognized by divination. As this rite has already
been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the
various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depict- 778
ed alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches
in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment.
The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong
moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their
respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green,
red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo
moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered
previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind
each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted,
together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned. In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud-* demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

755 776 755 171

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 796 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

755 778 171

[1] [see cat.116, p.78. – Analyst]

755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
● 778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
171 is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
778 all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders
[776 seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the
171] *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[776] If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
796 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
776 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
778 [see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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described,[2] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancieut Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz : Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy : *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom : *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are :

DAS S. CH. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

SCHLAGINTWEIT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet, Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

113 Only a single man escaped from the disaster alive. Frightened
539 by what had happened and fearing the wrath of the divinity, which in his opinion had brought about the annihilation of the members of his tribe, he determined to leave the place of misfortune and to seek an abode in Nepalese territory.

Therefore he went to the village of Phedap, where he married one of the girls of this place. In the course of time once again a tribe was formed from his numerous descendants. It likewise was designated as Na ong. But this generation of the Na ong also didn't prove to be much smarter than its ancestors.

[178] One day the Na ong decided to kill the fish in the sacred river Mai-khola, which flows near the village of Phedap. This river was regarded as the seat of a mighty divinity, to whom at one time thousands of animals were sacrificed once a year by the local Nepalese population. The blood of these animals colored the stream red for days.

The Na ong thought now that the local millet beer, called marwa, was probably the best poison to kill the fish; since it could make a strong man drunk, it was surely well-suited to destroy all the fish living in this river. Therefore they poured /894/ huge quantities of millet beer into the stream, but the divinity of the river, enraged by this sacrilege, killed the entire tribe on the spot. Only a boy and an old woman escaped annihilation.

The woman took care of the boy, and when he had finally grown to manhood, he married, (7) and his descendants again lived in the

7. Tradition does not tell to what tribe his wife belonged.

village Phedap. But the tribe never again flourished — a fact ascribed to the displeasure of the river god who, despite all the sacrifices offered to it by subsequent generations of the Na ong, would not be pacified. When finally only a few Na ong were alive, about sixty years ago, one of them named Kaipal decided to leave the settlement on the banks of the Mai-khola and move with his family near the place where his ancestors had once built the tower; for here — so he thought — the remainder of the tribe would escape the wrath of the river god and, under the protection of the ancestral spirits, would again increase in number. His son Karandal, the transmitter of this legend, later married a Limbu girl from the Malboma sib in the new

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama- [177] temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth- 756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its [534] tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yek* or *Yek-mes* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipol-bo*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

Ii:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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CHAPTER III

THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES OF SIKKIM

A. The Lepchas

The Lapches or Lepchas are supposed to be the original [101] inhabitants of Sikkim. They call themselves Rong; the Tibetans call them Mon, and the Bhutanese, Meri. The Mongoloid problem can best be studied through the Lepchas of the Southern Himalayas and hence they are dealt with more thoroughly.

According to one opinion the Lepchas are supposed [173] to have come not from Tibet, but from the east of the mountains from Assam and Upper Burma.[22] Their own tradition, how- [103] ever, states that their original home was in the neighbourhood of the great mountain, Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga[23] the second highest mountain in the world. That is the Tibetan name and means the "Great Glacier of the Five Store-rooms." The Lepcha name for the mountain is, "King-tzum-song-bu." King-tzum means "Highest part of the forehead," song-bu means "the highest." Literally it means, "the highest over our head." This Lepcha name is reproduced phonetically by the Tibetans as "Kang-chen-mdzod-lnga," which has quite a different meaning. This snow-covered mountain has [776] an important part to play as the habitat of the spirits. King-tzum-rum is the god of happiness; Rum-king-tzum is the god of fate.[24] From it the Lepchas derive the name Rong, by which they are known. Rong means "peak" or "mountain peak" and has the same significance as the word Arong.

Another tradition has it that the place of their origin is on the holy mountain Kailasa (Ti se) way up in Tibet. On the mountain is the stone Ne-long which bears the footprints [778] of Buddha and of animals. The god, Pum-rum, protector of [776] the hunters, lives there. Pum-rum is also another name for the Supreme God of the Lepchas as we shall soon see. The

22. J. C. White, Sikkim and Bhutan, London, 1909, p. 7.
23. Kangchenjunga, Fig. 17 & 18.
24. G. B. Mainwaring and A. Grünwedel, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, Berlin 1898, 17a, 356 b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-ca-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hō."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[732 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

732 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[733 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[58]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
243 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

58. op. cit. p. 479.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793
nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 797]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[87] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

87. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 294 a.b.

793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[176] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[181] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[164] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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755 782 up the entire skin. The blood is not used at all. On the little table that is against the wall the Tormas are deposited 778 and in front of them the two butter-lamps. The order of the 776 Tormas is as follows: (See the drawing figs. 20 & 21) 1. Rum- 755 thing-bo-a-mu, the wife of the supreme God. 2. Rum-thing-bo- 782 a-bo, the Supreme God. 3. Nyom, the daughter-in-law. 4. Rum-thing-bo-ta-gri-köb, the son of the Supreme God. 5. San-tug-kan-dro-mu (San-tug is a place below Algara; Kan-dro-mu is evidently like the Tibetan bKa-gro-ma, a sky fairy.) 6. Don-dyö-chi-log, another spirit who personifies both the intoxicating drinks, dyö and chi. Each of these six deities has on either side of it two servants who are called Bya-ro. Torma number 2, which represents the Supreme God, is the largest. It is about five inches high, of oval shape and is decorated with ten small lumps of butter as is shown in the drawing. Torma number 1, the wife, is smaller, being about four inches high and round in shape with the same decorations of butter. Tormas number 3 to 6 are similar to number 1, except that they are three inches high only. In front of this row are three Ka to, Tormas number 7, 8 & 9. In a squarish socket five cone shaped objects are placed. These are perhaps symbolical of the five-peaked mountain, but we could find out nothing more definite about them. Torma number 10 is a deity, Ka-to-sam or Gon-hiu-so. It is about two inches high, conical in shape, and decorated with streaks of butter. The Tormas of the Bya-ro servants are all alike, a little smaller and devoid of decorations. Before the table on which are placed the Tormas and the butter-lamps, there are five bamboo vessels and a wooden cup filled with chi. The cup, which stands fourth from the left, has its rim decorated with three little lumps of butter and is called San-dyö. We notice here again the names "chi" and "dyö" borne by the sixth deity. In front of these vessels there is a second small table, and six piles of rice placed on six banana leaf-plates lie on it. On top of each pile of rice are deposited a rib of the sacrifice and tiny pieces of the heart, liver, lung, spleen and kidneys. The number SIX is therefore a standard,—there are six principal gods, six chi containers, six piles of rice and six pieces of meat.

A banana leaf-plate containing rice is placed behind the skin on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh had been placed.

[Text continues on p. 63]

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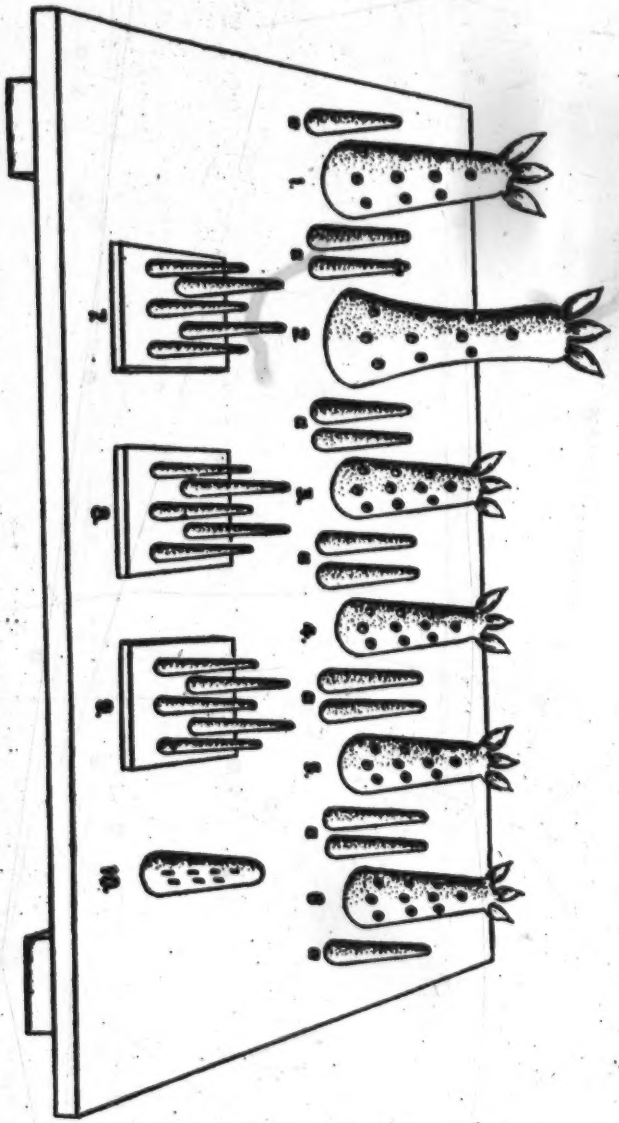

Fig. 20, Tormas of the gods

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On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miă song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

60. sa hor rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dnag rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,
sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense
pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyăr pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money
dong dăn dong dăm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dăn dang
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,
hiu dăm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)
blong ga dăn dong hiu dăm dong hiu o! ŏn sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!
tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of
mŭ song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal name is Chin-dön, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle 353
is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on 354
each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed
with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with [415]
rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of
little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter [372]
above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for 353
holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The
fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it
is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dor-
mitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut
off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made
of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over
this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree
trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally
one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on [778]
which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing
from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, 231
sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables 343
for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other
store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is com- [417]
pletely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. 361
But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or 342
four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles,
is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-
East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse 291
striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the
shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the
aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men
and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Some-
times the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a
bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for
this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the
practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas [286]
purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style
the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever in- [177]
creasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan

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wall on their right side (as must be done for all lamaist holy places or objects) turning the prayer wheels as they come up to them. 346 778

The chief holy place is a large bare room, occupying almost the whole of the ground floor of the building. The interior of the room is empty except for four supporting pillars in the middle of the floor, and two slightly raised seats running in parallel lines from the altar to the door on which the lamas sit during ceremonies. In the centre of the back wall is the altar, inset in a carved wooden frame; on it are three large images, Sangyi Youbami in the centre, flanked by Gamyang Kanché Rimbuché and Chérézi; in front of these larger images are four smaller gods. On either side of the altar are worked wooden pigeon-holes, in which are kept the hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyour, one of the two Tibetan scriptures. These volumes consist of loose leaves bound up in a cloth and fastened between two plain pieces of wood as bindings. Scattered about the room are the various musical instruments which are not in use—drums, gongs and cymbals; the metal instruments similar to trumpets and clarionets, the conch shells and the flutes made out of a human femur are kept either on or before the altar. Every morning at dawn a *kané* (sacristan) places on the altar before the images seven bowls of water for the gods to drink and wash in; every evening at sunset these bowls are emptied and replaced by *chimi*—altar lights, consisting of a small metal container with a wick of bamboo or cloth, filled with melted butter or oil. There also stands on the altar a copper jug containing blessed water (*tyü*) and usually a pair of vases filled with flowers. There are also occasional offerings of cones of ground grain. During important festivals the front of the altar is completely hidden by elaborate constructions, chiefly made out of dough and butter which represent those gods who are being specially worshipped. Anybody approaching this or any other lamaist altar for the first time is meant to prostrate himself three times, standing with joined hands, falling to the knees and then touching the ground with the forehead. After these prostrations no special attention is paid to the altar, and it is quite permissible to turn one's back on it. [779] [534]

To the west of the main room, with a separate entrance also on the north wall, is the *lha-gong*. This is a high and narrow chamber almost entirely filled with four huge prayer wheels, reaching up to the ceiling; indeed the first and biggest of the wheels, which is called Betsa Guru, pierces the ceiling and its top, a cone

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346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of
778 the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused
[783 cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark
785] chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A
[779] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber
289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

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173 century; about a generation later the Lepchas started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in land must have developed somewhat later; according to native tradition the land below the monastery—that is to say the more protected valley ground—has been divided into private property from time immemorial, but the higher ground was common property and was acquired and cleared as was wanted. At the time of Kahlyeu's father—that is to say about 1840—this ground too was divided up, and today all cultivatable ground is privately owned. Kahlyeu also said that until about 120 years ago only millet was cultivated, and not dry rice; but this seems to me improbable in view of the fact that the religious observances[8] are much more concerned with dry rice, than with millet or any other crop.

342 When new houses are made they are always built in the late autumn months, after the gathering of the harvest. This date is 777 dictated by two reasons; at no other period would people have sufficient leisure and other dates would be ill-omened. The intending builder gathers materials for some months beforehand. The site of a new house is decided by a number of metaphysical considerations.

[179] First of all there is a lamaist book called Sachet Zai Putta which contains general rules of a very minute nature, indicating what sites are lucky, and what unlucky. This book is said to have been composed by four Gods who gathered together at Gyakar (perhaps Benares) to compile rules so that people should know which sites are good and which bad, which fruitful and which barren, where children can be born, and where they cannot. The following is a small selection of these very detailed regulations:

'A good site is, if there is a mountain to the south and below a slope. It is good if there is a stream on either side of the slope and trees in front. It is good if there is an outcrop of rock to the east and a flat plain to the west and a water fall opposite. Roads from east and north are good, but those from south and west should be avoided as they are used by Deut *moong* (fever devil). If there is a tree to the north directly below the house it should never be cut down; if, however, there is one to the south directly above it, it should be cut, or, if it be too big to cut down, a knife or some other piece of iron should be stuck into it. If the earth on which the

[8] See Chapter Nine. It is probable that millet was historically the earlier crop: what I question is the date of the introduction of dry rice.

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771 religion is nameless but, on the analogy of lamaism, I propose calling
756 it the Mun religion (after the title of the priests); the worship of the people of Mayel, which was possibly originally separate, forms nowadays a part of the Mun religion; and this religion is in all its major beliefs opposed to lamaism. For the Mun priesthood goes by the possession of a manifestation of a supernatural spirit which is attached to a family line, so that there can never be more than one simultaneously in each group (there may be two in one biological family, one spirit descending from the father's group, and one from the mother's). The chief function of the Mun is to ward off the misfortunes and illnesses caused by devils, which is done, partly by sacrifices, especially animal sacrifices, and partly by direct communing with the supernaturals. On certain occasions the Mun become possessed by their guardian spirit and prophesy; at death ceremonies they summon the soul of the dead man to speak his last wishes through their mouth, and then conduct it into the *rum lyang*—the place of the Gods—where it is reborn as an infant, and grows up to an eternal life similar to the life here on earth.

771 In lamaism on the contrary priesthood and sanctity are acquired by learning and not by inspiration; the sacrifice of animals is a
● 779 heinous sin; the future can be learned by calculations from the holy books and not by inspiration; the soul of the dead wanders for a short time in a sort of purgatory, before being reincarnated either in another form on this earth, or going to some heaven or hell, as different as imagination can make them from anything experienced on earth. Most important of all, lamaist ethics are founded on a belief in individual destiny and a sense of sin; lamaism contains a long, explicit and detailed list of sins which can be performed by human beings, and which are visited on the evil-doer, first by feelings of remorse and secondly by punishment either in this life or in future reincarnations. Lepchas have a word for sin, because they have borrowed the Tibetan word, but they have, I think, no idea of sin; and the only act to which the word is commonly applied is to the killing of animals; by a few who have accepted lamaism it is also applied to envy or slander, expressed in thought, word or deed. With these exceptions they do not use the word 'sin,' *la-yo*, in connection with individual behaviour; the supernatural sanctions which punish disapproved-of actions are expressed as *nam-toak*, a year of disaster which affects the whole community. Even for acts less violently disapproved of, which

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incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lamaist supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

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000 essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

771 The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand, collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a 779 good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have 756 stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid 787 excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the 777 harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

756 Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men 771 flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and 779 also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing 787 into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. [824] For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification
● 779 in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

●779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

into the lamaseries. The fact that in the beginning of the eighteenth 175
century King Chador invented an alphabet for them so that they could read the scriptures suggests that by that date the majority were already converted; but for a long time—and even today in some of the monasteries of Sikkim—Lepchas and other foreigners are not accepted for training as lamas, this privilege being exclusive to pure-born and healthy Tibetans and Sikkimese (Bhotiyas). But in lamaism the layman has practically no rôle at all; he cannot pray to, address or influence the supernaturals save through the intermediary of a lama; and therefore conversion to lamaism without admission to instruction could mean little more than a sort of voluntary tax. The first monastery in Sikkim, that of Sanga Chelling, was founded in 1697, the Talung monastery in 1789, Lingthem monastery in 1855, and Gyatong in 1860.[4] The Lepcha monasteries are said to be under the jurisdiction of Pemiongchi monastery—the largest in Sikkim—which belongs to the Lhatsun-pa sub-sect of the Nyingma-pa.

Like all other religions lamaism is a compound of a number of 179
heterogeneous elements. The chief component is Mahayana Buddhism, or 'the greater vehicle' (itself an elaboration of Hinayana or primitive Buddhism—'the lesser vehicle'), to which has accreted a good deal of tantric Hinduism, some Chinese and Mongolian elements, and possibly the original Tibetan Bön-po religion.[5] Like other religions too, lamaism presents three aspects: a justifying mythology and scriptures, an ethic, and a social organisation.

The foundation and justification of lamaism is contained in the scriptures, above all in the two enormous collections of holy writings, the Kangyour or commandments (the Bible) and the Tangyour or commentaries (the Talmud). In these, together with other minor works, are to be found all knowledge and all necessary instruction for the conduct of life. The books have by themselves a talismanic virtue, and the reading of them is the essential preliminary to acquiring merit. These books apparently contain a

[4] I have taken these dates, and one or two other general statements from *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, vol. 1 (Calcutta 1894), particularly from the section *Lamaism in Sikkim* (pp. 241–391) by L. A. Waddell. Here, as in his book *The Buddhism of Tibet* (2nd. edition Heffer's, 1934), Dr. Waddell is exclusively concerned with the Tibetans and Sikkimese, and only mentions the Lepchas incidentally.

[5] Some modern critics suggest that this Bön-po religion may be the remnants of an historically earlier and unrecorded conversion of Tibet to Buddhism.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

779 very great variety of matter. Hinayana Buddhism was an atheist religion, and lamaism, though it deals with and reveres countless hosts of supernaturals, is in a way also atheist; it contains no major God or father-figure, and also no mother-surrogate. In many ways, as the early missionaries especially noted, lamaism in its organisation and ritual corresponds very closely with Roman Catholicism; but in their hagiology there is no equivalent to God the Father, or to the Virgin Mary; their gods, with their countless incarnations, correspond rather to the saints. Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché, is an object of special love and reverence, and might be likened emotionally to Jesus Christ. In the iconography and legends Guru Rimpuché is almost always a young man, an 'elder brother', rather than a 'father'. The demonology is as elaborate as the hagiology, but here also there is no principal figure.

The lamaist ethic is founded on the belief of the immortality of the soul, the principle of reincarnation, and on an automatic justice which rewards individual virtue and punishes individual sin in this and future incarnations; and, as a derivative, that an individual's condition in this life is the result of his actions in previous incarnations. This determinism is modified by behaviour during each life; and the object of the lamaist is by the active practice of virtue and the negative abstention from sin so to improve the soul that it can eventually escape from 'the wheel of cause and effect' and enter into the bliss of Nirvana or non-existence. The long list of sins of which a person is capable derive from three main causes—lust, ill-will and stupidity; virtue is acquired partly from abstention from acts deriving from such sources, partly by practising their opposites (love instead of hate, freeing captive animals instead of slaying them), and chiefly by the practice of religious ritual, including mystic contemplation. These last methods of acquiring perfection are only open to lamas; all that it is possible for laymen to do is to abstain from sin and support the lamas, in the hope that they will be rewarded by being themselves lamas in their next incarnations. Lamas and laymen alike can gain merit by repeating, or causing to be repeated, various prayers or *mantra*; the most famous of these is the six-syllabled *Om! mani pudme hum!* which is believed to be of great efficacy. It is not necessary to say these prayers with the lips; if they are inscribed on anything and this inscribed prayer is moved it is the equivalent to the actual uttering of the prayer. There are a number of devices for this automatic praying, the chief of which is the prayer wheel; prayer-wheels

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

are made in every size, from the smallest to be held and turned in the hand, to enormous ones several times bigger than a man, all stuffed with repetitions of the *mantra*; every turn of these wheels is an acquisition of merit and a remission of sin. It is not even necessary that the pray-er should go to the effort of turning these wheels; wheels driven by mechanical power are just as efficient. Tafoor has four water-turned prayer-wheels set over a small stream by his house. The next most conspicuous method of automatic praying is the prayer-flag; this consists of a piece of cloth stamped with various *mantra* and attached to a pole; each time the wind makes the cloth flutter it is as if the prayer were uttered. There are a variety of these flags, some being for the benefit of the dead and others for that of the living. Finally the inscription of a *mantra* on stone (either in Tibetan or preferably Lenza characters) and set into a monument or building, acts as though this inscribed prayer was being said continuously.

The metaphysical beliefs of the lamas concerning the soul are various and self-contradictory. The soul of man can die, but the soul is immortal. The soul can be devoured by demons or destroyed by sorcery and will nevertheless be reincarnated. With the exception of the earth itself and certain mountains, which are the homes of supernaturals, everything possesses a soul; but the souls of rocks and plants are very weak and only survive as long as their owner survives. With plants every seed, as soon as it is formed, possesses a potential soul of its own, as does a cutting, as soon as it is separated from the parent plant and stuck in the ground. It is a meritorious act to increase vegetable souls but no punishable sin is committed by destroying them.

The souls of animals (with the exception of leeches and mosquitoes, which are believed to be emanations of devils and soul-less) are far more important; it is a major sin to destroy an animal for it is possible that its soul may be that of an ex-human being; and pious people will erect prayer-flags for animals killed through accident or in the normal course of human life. Partly by divination, and partly by the observation of footprints near the place where the body was disposed of, it is possible to tell if the soul of a recently dead relative has been reincarnated as an animal; if this does occur it is said that the near relations should abstain from eating this species of animal. I never came across nor heard of such an instance of ritual prohibition, for dead people are never discovered to have migrated into any animal which was fit to eat.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
●779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
[751] its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.*
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

* The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and ends up dressed in white with a bow and arrow. This is 755
believed to fool the devil, as is the device of taking a new name for a year.

Some of the sacrificial objects are elaborate and expensive and demand several hours and a great deal of material to make. All the [779] rituals are described in various sacred books, and when making the sacrificial objects these books are always consulted.

I think the nearest parallel to the attitude of the Lepchas towards 751
lamaist and Mun ceremonies can be found in that of an ignorant and somewhat hypochondriac European towards germs (the devils) and vitamins (the gods). There are a number of precautionary antiseptic measures to be taken against germs: salad is washed in disinfectant, food wrapped up in cellophane, children not kissed for fear of infection, the nose held when there is a bad smell from a drain, inoculations made against the fear of various diseases at regular intervals. Psychologically these precautions correspond almost exactly to the general and regular apotropaic services, either those held for the whole community or the obligatory consultations which have to take place at the beginning of each twelve-year cycle after the third. Once a germ has got a hold the disease has to be diagnosed and various remedies applied, for some of which you call in a doctor while others are traditional. These remedies correspond to the special services held in the case of illness or misfortune, the lama being rather regarded in the light of the consultant specialist and the Mun as the purveyor of old-world and traditional remedies. To keep in good health one has to follow certain rules about ventilation and sunlight and a correctly balanced diet. For the Lepchas these precepts are replaced by the worship of the gods. It is important to worship the gods and to have plenty of vitamins but to drive away devils and to get rid of germs is emotionally far more urgent and important. Though the other-worldly aims of lamaism are on the lips of some lamas they do not seem to me to be of great emotional importance; people say 'there are fewer devils here now that we have the lamas and their books' rather as they might say 'there is less diphtheria here now that we have got the new drainage system'. Though the lamas are considered to have driven away a number of the older devils an almost equally great number of new devils have been brought in following the arrival of Sikkimese and Nepali, as new diseases have arisen from new occupations and conditions of life to replace those which have been destroyed by a stricter application of hygiene.

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ii

The Mun religion has a very copious validating mythology and theology. The origin of everything in the world, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, and the changes they have undergone to bring them to their present state are told in a great number of stories of varying emotional importance. Some of the simplest of the 'origin' stories are known and told by everyone; the more important ones require *loong* before they can be told; and the most important of all, the story of creation, is only known in its full details by the Mun; one of the chief parts of their training is the learning of this story, which it is said takes seven whole days in its telling, by heart. By far the greater part of it consists of lists of pairs of supernaturals who produce the phenomena which greet our eyes today.

'Under this world is an ocean; under that ocean is another earth of twelve super-imposed stories, and under that there lives Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and her husband Débu. Their first children were Tak-seu and Tak-from, who are also called Narzong-*nyou* and Komsi*thing*. After them were born Mlum Mukyam, Sakyeun-faat-it, Saba-faat-chaum, Suk-dum-lung-ming and Chi-lel, all of whom are the present earth; Palyou and Pakyam who are gladness and joy; then Ta-lyang, Ta-kook and Ta-kok who are the blue sky without ornament: then Bru-nong, and Jil-vong, Long-mu and Tso-kor who are the forest in the sky where the stars live: then Tak-bru-num and Jit-it who are the stars. The ocean between the two worlds is called lyang-tak-yoor *oong*, tagum-lyang-shin-mu *oong* and is the home of Tal-i-nau and her husband San-go. Under the second earth are two huge copper vessels beside Itpomu, full of water, and under them is a fire; this is the reason why the earth becomes warm and wet. Then was born Panjer-roong and Pantsong-roong which is the Rungit river; then Kum-zer roong which is the origin of hot streams which cure all ills . . . then were born Num-ri and Num-ra who begat the thunder-bird, *sadher*. . . .' The greater part of the story continues in this vein.

Later on in the same story the origin of devils and the creation of the Mun spirit is recounted. This is also a very long story but is far better known than the Genesis. I only propose to give an outline of it.

'The first children of Itpomu and Débu were Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*; although they were brother and sister they

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346 373 lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

779 On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the [778] 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the 346 Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the [212] Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no 352 chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) [516] sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged 792 in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

346 The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one 788 end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in 778 addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

778 The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[768 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
● 779 moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788 There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781 it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

1 [i.e. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tafeor.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars [417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which 231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a [787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he 342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of ● 779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Haribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

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While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796 the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779] book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796 saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522 Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831 the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781] at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796 garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358] Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

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796

The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

[346
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855]

[779
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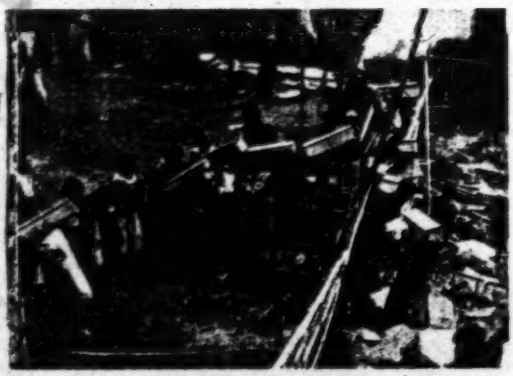

The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

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796
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The return of the *Boom Ker* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[FACING p.291]

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622 answer to questions and which gave an answer which seemed so
[538] foolish to the devil that she tore the oracle up by the roots.[4] He is perhaps a trifle too easy-going and a few people appear to take advantage of his good nature; the village, as opposed to some of its less prosperous neighbours, has considerable arrears of taxes; the Mandal himself is considerably in debt. When animals are slaughtered for sacrifice he is in great demand as butcher to distribute the different portions; everybody knows him to be fair and nobody questions his decisions on this or other matters of greater import-
[183] ance. He is very explicit about the main orientations of the culture; for example, he explained that the help that will be given by everybody to poor or indebted men was a special Lepcha custom; 'and I think it is a very good one because it makes everybody realise that they are part of one group and the happiness of one is the happiness of all.'

622 In some respects Chala Mandal exaggerated the casualness with which all Lepchas, except lamas, treat the minor details of religious
● 781 rites or the performance of ordinary actions. A constantly recurring phrase, which almost turns into a catchword, in Lepcha conversation is *ket ma-nin*—'it doesn't matter'. The grain isn't covered and the birds will get it—*ket ma-nin*. There is no dried fish and the offering ought to have it—*ket ma-nin*. Chala Mandal was completely sceptical about new-fangled notions, such as the danger to people or plants from menstruating women, which have been imported from outside.

622 In the event of the Mandal dying without a suitable heir the *youmi* (see below) will act as substitute until the householders have chosen one of their number to become Mandal; preference would probably be given to a member of the same *ptso* but there is no obligation to do so. When a unanimous choice has been decided upon the name will be submitted in a petition to the Rhennock Kazi. For two years the candidate will be on approval, and only after he has shown himself to be thoroughly satisfactory will his tenure of office be officially confirmed. Even when the new Mandal is closely related to the old one he must be formally elected by the householders and confirmed in office by the Maharajah and Kazi. The chief qualifications demanded of a Mandal are wisdom, character, popularity, and adequate wealth.

624 The offices of Muktair and Mandal can be held by lamas; the other two offices, *youmi* and *gyapŏn* can not, as these offices may

[4] See Appendix V, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions. 787 [732]

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest. 793

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects. [556]

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the 781 787

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

781 negative results which occurred through not following their instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first 787 horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace' consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo. This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom; in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representation of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and readings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began; then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use); and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbutipkū* round her image were handed out for all to wave over themselves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar. It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in procession across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments, as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

186 and isolating irrelevant and unintegrated attitudes comes I think from indifference and not from scepticism. A comparison might be found in the way Occidentals under the orders of doctors will accept temporary but profound modifications of their habits or diet without considering that their former habits were wrong or that others should follow them; they give up meat for example because the doctor says that for the moment it will disagree with them, not because they have become convinced vegetarians. The 781 Lepchas are not sceptical about various methods of dealing with the supernatural, but their belief has no intensity or rigidity. It is possible that before their conversion to lamaism the Lepchas felt more strongly that they possessed the only correct way of dealing with the supernatural; but now that they have accepted the idea that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypotheses. It is worth remembering also that religious rituals are only performed by a very small part of the population—by the lamas and Mun; the lay population merely summon them when they think they need their services and provide the raw materials from which the lamas will fashion the religious objects. The vast majority of Lepchas never perform any religious rites (beyond perhaps turning a prayer wheel and prostrating themselves before the lamaist images); religion with the Lepchas is the occupation of a minority of specialists.

157 Within limits the Lepchas are also extremely tolerant of individual variations in temperament. They are adamant in resisting any encroachment on their individual and group independence, and they will not permit overt aggression or ambition, or the sidestepping of communal duties; but provided a person fulfils his private and public obligations, keeps the peace, and does not seek to impose on or exploit others, or to go counter to the rules of the society, he is permitted considerable latitude. The Lepchas insist on very considerable social conformity; but if an individual carries out his social obligations adequately and does not seek to interfere with or destroy the privacy and independence of others, others will also respect his privacy and independence. The Lepchas so dislike being ordered about, that even on construction jobs which could be quicker and more efficiently performed with a director of operations, they insist on working independently, and appear to ignore anybody who tries to give orders.

[578] This antithetic emphasis on social conformity and individualism

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 384] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[788 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

[1] [ie. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapsor.--Analyst]

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked. 796 781

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chōtembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell. 796 [533 781]

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain. [787]

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be 796 571

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains 243
were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

I noticed that amongst the seed for planting were three potatoes. These were also to be planted in the field for the purpose of providing seed for next year's crop. I suggested [244 that so few a number would be lost sight of in so large a field. 242] Jiroong agreed: he usually planted them in the field outside his house, but was trying them here to see what happened. There is no ceremony in connection with planting the first seed; nor does it matter whether men or women do the planting. To-day the actual planting was being done by women; but this was of no significance.

Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in [242] the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice- 243
planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of 781
Mayal Rum, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781 888 857] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 533 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
● [781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [78] ●
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself
came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of
the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any
way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's
Pi-bo got up and made a short speech. While this was in
progress general conversation ceased: but before it was
finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [83]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking
again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony
of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed.
By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest
was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in
the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms
were now completely filled with people and the smoke was
so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the
room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin
state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring
peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [52]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of
drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still
talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived
Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the
same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the
crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front
of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce
anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene,
since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal
was being prepared and would later be served to all the
guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among
the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight
in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779]
book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781] ●
at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358]
Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

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After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

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law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal
remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the
hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the
rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease
are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are
still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they
pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good
spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every
rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief,
and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts
to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils,
who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they
acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert
all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:"
they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between
the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they
assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they
sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg,
bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving
praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others
again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed
to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 [181] generous disposition, keep the wallet of the Bijooa always full.

131 181 Such are some of the prominent features of this people, who inhabit the sub-Himalayas, between the Nepalese and Bhotan frontiers, at elevations of 3000 to 6000 feet. In their relations with us, they are conspicuous for their honesty, their power as carriers and mountaineers, and their [342] skill as woodsmen; for they build a waterproof house with a thatch of banana leaves in the lower, or of bamboo in the elevated regions, and equip it with a table and bedsteads for three persons, in an hour, using no implement but their heavy knife. Kindness and good humour soon attach them to your person and service. A gloomy-tempered or morose master they avoid, an unkind one they flee. If they serve a good hills-man like themselves, they will follow him with alacrity, sleep on the cold, bleak mountain exposed to the pitiless rain, without a murmur, lay down the heavy burden to carry their master over a stream, or give him a helping hand up a rock or precipice—do anything, in short, but encounter a foe, for I believe the Lepcha to be a veritable coward.* It is well, perhaps, he is so: for if a race, numerically so weak, were to embroil itself by resenting the injuries of the warlike Ghorkas, or dark Bhotanese, the folly would soon lead to destruction.

131 144 181 Before leaving the Lepchas, it may be worth mentioning that the northern parts of the country, towards the Tibet frontier, are inhabited by Sikkim Bhoteeas † (or Kumpas),

* Yet, during the Ghorka war, they displayed many instances of courage: when so hard pressed, however, that there was little choice of evils.

† Bhote is the general name for Tibet (not Bhotan), and Kumpa is a large province, or district, in that country. The Bhotanese, natives of Bhotan, or of the Dhurma country, are called Dhurma people, in allusion to their spiritual chief, the Dhurma Rajah. They are a darker and more powerful race, rude, turbulent, and Tibetan in language and religion, with the worst features of those people exaggerated. The various races of Nepal are too numerous to be alluded

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
●[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize ; sama, a kind of white millet ; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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773
he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 773
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[66]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 773
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār Basti gives us an 773
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 773
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

66. op. cit. p. 349 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[774] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[778] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[781] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[777] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[764] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 so as to gratify the devils which have taken up their abode in the neighbourhood so that they shall not trouble the work in progress. Then the four corner-posts and the centre post are set up, and the low stone walls, on which the house will rest, are built. The building should always start from the east. After the pillars and stone walls have been set up straight by an overseer the building proceeds without direction, the walls, flooring, ceiling, rafters and finally the thatch being built. When people know that [476] a house is being built or repaired they come to help spontaneously; they are given no pay or wages of any sort except a meal at the end of the day; but they know that they in their turn will receive help when they need it. Men, women and children all lend a hand at the various tasks; but women are considered incapable of handling the biggest pieces of timber.

Some time after its completion the house must be consecrated by lamas and Mun with the ceremony of *Tashi chéné*; ideally this should be performed as soon as the house is completed and repeated twice in subsequent years; but it is often not done immediately for the owner may not possess the ox and other necessary materials. When the first meal is eaten in the completed house some old and experienced man (not the house-owner himself, but it does not matter who else) must make a small hole in the roof immediately above the fireplace and throw out a live ember and some water; this is done so that the smoke may go out properly and not fill the house.

The ceremony of *Tashi chéné* is as follows. First of all incense leaves are burned to pacify the demons who live in the earth below the house and who may have inhabited the trees of which the house is [782] built. Then a live ox is dedicated by a Mun to all the gods, slaughtered and cut up; the head, right foreleg and left hind-leg [465] (these portions are called *ga-zook*) are given to the carpenters who have worked on the house as their fee. After this a lamaist ceremony, with music and readings from the appropriate books, is performed, at the end of which the chief lama present (if possible one of the Dorjé Lapoon)[11] will anoint the house-pillars with blood, *chi*, liquor and butter, starting with the western pillar and proceeding to

[11] Dorjé Lapoon is the title given to the oldest, wisest, and most revered lamas; it is not strictly translatable: dorjé is the sacred 'thunderbolt' which is part of the lama's sacred paraphernalia; lapoon means teacher. In works dealing with Tibet the title is usually translated as 'abbot', but this term seems to me inappropriate for non-resident dignitaries.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

356 much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

776 Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts [787] are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go [782] away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

346 In some houses however it is divided that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and 346 is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's 782 house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intestines—the heart, liver and lungs, the *shafot*—are cooked with rice and offered to *Thyak-dum* together with three *patyoot* of fresh *chi*. *Thyak-dum* is partially attached to the house, and partially to the inhabitants thereof; that is to say that people coming into a new house would have to exorcise him were they able to do so; but if the old inhabitants had moved to another dwelling *Thyak-dum* would accompany them, spending most of his time with them, but occasionally returning to his and their old home. This last point is almost purely theoretical, for it very very seldom happens that Lepchas change their homes. If a house proved consistently unlucky, with many people dying and nothing prospering, and if it were divined that the house was the cause of these disasters, the survivors might move; but although some houses in Lingthem had had far more than their share of death and misfortune the inhabitants still stayed in them. The only reason for which houses were actually abandoned was loneliness, because the few survivors preferred to live with relations rather than cope with the work alone.

V

In front of each Lepcha house is a field fenced in with bamboo; it is called the garden (*sing*), and in it are raised those vegetables and roots which are used for flavouring food. These however are only grown in small quantities on the edge, and the greater part of the field is sown with grain crops; first of all barley and spring wheat mixed, which ripens in April, and subsequently maize. This garden is the only portion of Lepcha land which receives animal manure; it is against the house, under which domestic animals shelter at night; their dung is collected and thrown over the fence. At the bottom of nearly every garden is a plantation of bamboos, cultivated so as to have an easily available supply of this invaluable material. Near the house too are usually a small number of fruit trees—oranges, peaches, apples, pears, plums, tree-tomatoes—and occasionally one or two shrubs, usually roses, are grown for their flowers.

The rest of the land of the household is scattered all over the surrounding district, and it is seldom that people own the land near their house. All possess some strips of land—often more than a dozen for a single household—on the warmer lower slopes of the valley, where the climate is suitable for the cultivation of wet rice, cardamum, and some of the earlier millets or eleusines.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Consequently the recognised habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter—so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To these, maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 753 782 614

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

842 823

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

823 773

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

776

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

[751 824]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies—or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafét* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafét* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafét*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

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selves will give a small present to the Mun who will sing for all of them. The grain which is used in this sacrifice has to be specially ripened in the sun in the same way as the grain for seed is ripened. This completes the ceremony of sowing and it is always followed by a feast in which meat is eaten.

The ceremony of harvesting is far more complicated. It is only employed for the dry rice. When the dry rice is ripe a little is picked to be prepared for *chi* and when the *chi* is ready the owner of the field summons all his friends and they go together to pick rice. Until the ceremony is completed nobody, not even children, may pick any grain or he would get ill; if anybody gets stomach-ache at that period people will say that he has picked rice before it was harvested.

[753]

It is necessary to have ready beforehand the smoke-dried *tafoot* of a pig. The *tafoot* would seem to be the gall-bladder or spleen; it is round and has a white smelly liquid inside and is found near the bladder, but in pigs and musk deer it is said to be found near the penis at the end. On the day of reaping this *tafoot* is taken up to the field of dry rice together with two burning brands from the house-fire and also a *patyoot* of *chi* made from the new rice. When the party arrives, a place in the centre of the field is chosen as the *ʒo-lam* (the place where the crops are heaped); some rice-plants in the centre of the *ʒo-lam* are tied together into a sheaf and then the two burning brands will be held above them and on these a piece of the *tafoot* will be put. Then an old and experienced man—not the owner of the field but any one of his workers—will be chosen to represent a man of Mayel (called for the ceremony Mayel-mu) and he will blow on the *tafoot* and speak; while this is done a special measuring basket is held upside down over the brand. The old man will summon the gods and the ancestors and will say 'Come and see the smoke; burr—burr—burr—burr'. Then all the people present will repeat, 'burr—burr—burr'. By this invocation it is hoped that the gods will come and bring back all the grain eaten by wild birds and animals.

Standing by the speaker is a woman not directly connected with the field owner, who has been chosen for the day to represent Talyeu-mu, one of the earth sisters. When Mayel-mu has finished his invocation the measuring basket is put on his back and Talyeu-mu cuts the tied grain and puts it in the basket. Then Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu, who acts as her load carrier, go round the *ʒo-lam* cutting a basket of rice for Talyeu-mu; at the same time

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the others cut two baskets of rice for the people of Mayel. When the three baskets have been cut four or five reed mats are put down on the flattened ground and all dance on the rice to separate the grain from the chaff. All the dances are round dances and semi-acrobatic, consisting chiefly of hopping and jumping; nine different types are recognised and three rounds of each type are danced in turn. After the dancing Talyeu-mu goes round the edge of the field cutting another basket while all the other reapers work in a row to fill two more baskets which are heaped up like the first; after these have been put on the *ʒo-lam* the *nam-toak* (potential curse) is lifted and all can cut as they like; but during the whole day Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu cut apart from the others. When the second heap of rice has been poured on to the *ʒo-lam* a fence is erected to the south of it consisting of three leafy saplings joined by a bamboo; on it a mat is hung and then from the three posts are fastened three bundles of rice-plants, ears downwards, hanging over the mat. After this fence is set up the *patyoot* of new *chi* is placed against it and Mayel-mu offers it with an invocation. Then at the four corners of the *ʒo-lam* are erected four posts of a sort of reed or bamboo; the top part is split into three and the two side pieces are bent down to make loops.

When the *ʒo-lam* has been completed all do as they like; some gather rice, some dance, some drink *chi* and so on. The harvesting must be completed before the sun has touched the hills; if all is not cut by then the work must go on the next day and the people must spend the night on the harvest field, as will be explained lower down. Right at the end must be gathered another three baskets of rice which must be completed at the same time; these three baskets are all emptied at the same time to the east of the heap and all present cry 'burr, burr, burr'. The rice is now put in eight heaps; that of the morning is put in the centre where the house-mother works; that of Talyeu-mu to the east and the other six heaps in a semi-circle to the north; these six heaps are named after six big mountains in the neighbourhood. Then the rice is separated from the chaff and straw partially by hand and partially by dancing; all work together at the different heaps except the house-mother and Talyeu-mu who work theirs by themselves. When all the rice is sifted the house-mother and Talyeu-mu push the heap of Talyeu-mu to the centre heap saying 'May the heap support us firmly and be as the sea'. After that all the other heaps are pushed into the centre, one after the other in due order. Then a wreath of rice

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241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-
782 mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

786 If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *ʒo-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafêt* is offered with the new *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May
782 these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

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24 784 living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

241 The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

iii

224 782 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

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the hunter crouching behind and speaking very slowly and softly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken that no woman sees the animal's head; if she did the hunter would have no success in future.

To know how to sacrifice to Pong *rum* it is necessary to learn how to, and to receive *loong*; for this purpose the novice goes to anybody who knows—maybe his father or some other relation or a friend—taking with him *chi* and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee. Great care must be taken that no woman is present at this time. When the older man sees the gifts he enquires what they are for and is told it is to learn how to sacrifice. The older man then arranges the sacrifice and tells the neophyte to sit with his back to him: he must not look but must listen most attentively. After that the neophyte on the next suitable occasion will make the sacrifice; the instructor will be near him and if he makes a mistake will nudge him, whereat the sacrifice must be stopped short. Subsequently the neophyte will take another lesson, continuing until he is word perfect and has received his *loong* and can sacrifice on his own.

A person who has once been to the communal sacrifice to Pong *rum* should continue to do so all his life; he may, however, give it up, in which case he is liable to be troubled with poltergeist manifestations by Pong *rum*, who anyhow if he is displeased with a hunter will pursue him whistling, and the thump of heavy stones falling will be heard, though no stones are seen to fall. It is even preferable for hunters' children to continue the ritual.

Kurma used to hunt but does so no longer and has given up going to the sacrifice to Pong *rum*; for he is afraid that should he go and then not hunt he would become mad. As things are he is somewhat persecuted by Pong *rum*; he describes these persecutions with the greatest detail and indifference. He says quite freely that he does not care a bit.

Near his house is an orange tree and some time ago on a moonlight night he heard distinctly the sound of big stones being thrown under this tree; but there was nothing to be seen so he knew it was Pong *rum*; he therefore returned to the house, lit some incense leaves and butter and came out and offered it to the god saying 'Please forgive us; we have no intention of hunting'.

'Only a month ago when some friends were in my house with me drinking *chi* I heard my dog which was tethered some way

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224 from the house barking furiously; I went outside expecting that somebody was passing but I could see no-one. When I returned to
782 the house we heard the dog whimper and then stop; we went outside and found its dead body in front of the house. Of course Pong *rum* had killed it, but I do not care: I just offered the gods some incense.'

Kurma's younger brother used to hunt but never learnt how to make the sacrifice properly; Kurma used to do it for him. But on one occasion when he was away, his maternal uncle sacrificed and instead of making the offering to Pong *rum* made it to his own god. This is one of the reasons given for this young man's subsequent violent death in the forest.[4]

Kurma's family are now very unlucky hunters and the reason is as follows. Three generations ago their forefather was a very lucky hunter who worshipped Shing *rum* (the wife of Pong *rum*). At that time the Mandal of the village was an unlucky hunter; he worshipped Pong *rum*. Now these two agreed to change gods. To do this they killed an ox and then drank three cups of *chi* mixed with the blood, with dabs of butter on the side, for this constitutes the most binding oath. From that day the descendants of the Mandal were always successful hunters while the descendants of the other man were always unlucky. Pong *rum* and Shing *rum* are naturally exclusively male gods.

Before drinking *chi* (in the case of lamas also before drinking tea) or eating food a little is offered to the gods. If the food is domestic in origin it is thrown away from the eater, if of wild origin towards the eater, that is backwards. These offerings are tiny and quite automatic; the 'straw' is lifted from the *chi* and flicked outwards; a few crumbs are dropped from the first handful. No form of prayer accompanies these offerings.

[4] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 402–403.

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pigs, a large copper pot, or in lieu of it Rs. 20 for the girl's father, a length of fine cloth, or in lieu Rs. 13 (formerly Rs. 20) for the mother, Rs. 3 for the bride, and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee for the girl's *bek-bu*. 583

When these gifts have been collected, they are consecrated by a special Mun ritual in the groom's house before being taken to the girl's family. If the house contains a lamaist altar this is decorated and *chimi* are lit, and the offerings placed before it, the disembowelled pigs in front, and behind the copper pot with the other gifts on top of it. An officiant is needed to consecrate the gifts; it is preferable that the 'sacrificer', the *rum-faat-bu*, should be a Mun, but it can also be performed by any old and experienced layman with the necessary qualification. Incense is burned, *chi* from a buttered cup and rice offered, and a long invocation is made to the gods to bless the marriage and make it fruitful; besides the personal and *piso* supernaturals of the groom special emphasis is placed on the appeal to Komsi*thing* and Tarbong-bo, who are involved in the original institution of marriage.[2] After the consecration a ceremonial meal of rice and sausages made from the pig's intestines is eaten, and the groom then sets off with his *bek-bu* and three men to carry the presents. The carriers should be ideally a paternal uncle, a maternal uncle and an elder brother; failing them, people standing in a similar position are employed. 583 782

At this visit the groom and his party usually stop three or four days at the girl's house. The two betrothed are meant to keep together, sitting by one another and feeding one another, and to sleep side by side. At this initial meeting the attention of all the elders is concentrated on noticing the way the two young people behave towards one another; because of this attention, and on account of the general situation, the young couple are usually in an agony of self-conscious shame and can hardly bear to look at or speak to one another. 583 584

After this initial visit the *aséк* party returns home, but a few days later the groom makes a second visit, taking with him a gift of meat and usually accompanied by an uncle. At this visit the young couple, if they are of a suitable age, are meant to copulate together, and their uncles are meant to supervise this operation to make sure it takes place; if they do not, the one who refuses to do so—and it is considered equally likely that the refuser will be the boy or the girl—will be severely admonished and may be thrashed by

[2] See Appendix IV. The Sacred Story of the Origin of Marriage.

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000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[197] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 *Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven*
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285] ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415 bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

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The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyen and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

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782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

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782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as
before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

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I suspect that geologists would find this explanation unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

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346 373 lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

779 On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the [778] 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the 346 Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the [212] Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no 352 chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) [516] sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged 792 in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopōn, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

346 The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one 788 end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which is 778 addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

778 The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

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given in sacrifice; and, in addition, a promise given that when they are in a position to keep the pledge they will give the required animals to the spirits. No one will dare to break the pledge until he is freed from this wasteful superstition."

Personal communication from the Very Rev. Dr. J. A. GRAHAM, C.I.E., D.D. 1937.

Missionary influence: a letter from a Christian Lepcha girl thanking a friend for a present.

"Kalimpong,
"10/9/37.

"DEAR MISTER SAHIB,—

"Many many thanks for your affectionate parcel, which I received yesterday through a Chaprasi. By testing that parcel of an egg, I nearly fainted down, but I myself illustretted [*sic*] my heart. I hope you will be my ever provider. I hope for four dozen eggs of such kinds.

"Please excuse me for my mistake.

"Cheery You!

"Your ever helpless,
"J. M. Lepchani.

"P.S.—If you will not give the reply of this letter then and there I shall seldom write you again."

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CHAPTER 5

Lamaism: Monks and Nuns

TO the ignorant Lepcha the world is peopled by 776 spirits; evil spirits known as *Mung*, and good spirits known as *Rum*, or gods. It is difficult sometimes to decide whether a particular spirit is devil or god; for while a Mung is always evil, a Rum, if angered, will appear in a malicious guise and may then be referred to as a demon. Every happening in the material world is due to the influence of spirits. Devils cause sickness, bad harvests, and every other kind of misfortune: but provided they are appeased by means of the correct sacrifices their evil can be averted, and on occasions they may even be induced to further some particular project, such as causing the death of an enemy, or winning the heart of some apparently stony-hearted woman. Some earlier writers have described the Lepchas as animists, but I believe this idea to be mistaken. Animism implies the attribution of a living soul to inanimate 774 objects and natural phenomena; but the Lepcha has not this belief. According to his ideas, trees, rivers, rocks and other natural objects are only the homes of spirits; but as such they must be treated with proper respect. The objects themselves, however, while they are sometimes thought to possess a separate soul, do not need to be propitiated. When a house, 774 for instance, is being built, a sacrifice will be made when the 782 trees are felled from which it is to be constructed. This sacrifice, however, is offered not to the spirits considered to be inherent in the trees themselves, but to compensate for any annoyance which might be caused to spirits living in them, and also as a general expiation for the sin of taking life; for trees, being living things, are thought to have separate souls of their own. This last is only a minor

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774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
766 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[538] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

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individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
● 782 human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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but later on a Mun appeared to him in a dream and told him what to do. Nowadays he always dreams before a ceremony, and thus learns what action he has to take. During the course of these dreams he speaks with Kings of Sikkim, Europeans, and all sorts of other people. Actually it is a demon who is speaking to him, but it has chosen to adopt this form.

Before becoming a Mun Gongyop was ill for nearly three years, and during all this time lay almost like dead, the symptoms being the same as with his previous illness. He was visited by both Mun and Lamas; and both divined that he was being troubled by the Mun's own private god; and that the only way he could recover was to make this god his own. Part of the ceremony was done by a Lama; but the most important part, known as *Rum-Keuk*, was done by a female Mun. An ox was slaughtered and part of its flesh, together with grain and butter, was offered to the gods by the Mun. She was offered five rupees in payment for her services; but refused to accept any money until Gongyop had completed his studies: she took only the head and two legs of the ox, together with its vital organs. These had formed the actual ceremonial offering. Gongyop did not understand the words she used during the ceremony as she spoke in a special esoteric language; but in any case he was so ill at the time that he could not even drag himself outside the house for the purposes of nature: he was unable to see properly; nor could he hear. He remained by her side during the ceremony and from time to time she waved things over him. Before the actual physical signs of his illness developed he became as one mad. He would wander aimlessly about without knowing where he was going: sometimes he went to other people's houses, and sometimes he would roam in the forest. He never knew what he was doing; nor did he afterwards remember where he had been. Sometimes he had the feeling that he could walk very fast, as though he was being transported on air. He believes that in this way he

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756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

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755 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

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possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

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754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf 793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

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The place selected for the ceremony was in a small 796
clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchin- 823
junga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more 782
venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border 823
of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

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play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which [787]
was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depict- 778
ed alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

782 a small image, which is afterwards connected with the
778 thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-
moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the
776 lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where
it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds
[171] to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned. In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

753 If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed
776 that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called
Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for
782 appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made
778 with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

782 The second ceremony has already been described else-
778 where.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

755 For curing a person who has fallen ill through the
776 influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a
[See cat. 116, p 78. - Analyst]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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that is the case I will no longer stay with you." Henceforth 773
he wandered alone until he came to a plain where he made 776
his abode.[42]

According to another legend, man springs from a pair of deities or from deified ancestors. The above-mentioned Tak-bo-thing and Nazong-ngyu belong to the category of these deified ancestors. The old woman, Han-bu-ni, who is Mun and Andshemu told me this, "Sa-dzug-rum is the god of heaven and the sun. His wife is Gor-song-mu, that is the mother of Gor-song, because she has a son by that name. She also has a daughter. Sa-dzug-rum is like a father and mother of mankind. I offer sacrifices to him three times each [782 241]
year after the rice, corn and millet harvests. The animal most suitable for the sacrifice is the pig. The next best is the bullock or cow, and the goat ranks last. The pig is killed by piercing its heart from under the shoulder-blade. The cattle are killed by a blow with an axe on the back of the neck. The goats have their throats cut.

Another pair of deities are Kang-chen-rum, who lives in 776
Himal, and his wife, Nyo-lig-rum, who lives in the sea. They have two children; the son, Dju-köb, and the daughter, Bi-köb. But the highest of all these gods is Sa-dzug-rum."

Thus this old Mun and Andshemu regards Sa-dzug-rum as their Supreme God, and believes that he has a wife. She however disagrees about calling Gor-song the first man. She also denies that Dju-köb and Bi-köb were the ancestral parents of the tribe. However she was unable to give us the names of the first men.

Sa-liang, the son and pupil of the famous Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicted her and related the following, "The Supreme God is Sa-dzug-rum. He has no wife, but four assistants. These are the four spirits who bring discord and pain into the world. They have therefore to be appeased by sacrifices [782]
performed twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation. Rather, it is Rum who is the god of creation. He it was who created the first human beings, Ti-gung and Ni- [773]
gung. For a while they were serenely happy and were free from anxiety and suffering. Later they sinned, and as a

42. cfr. a similar myth quoted above p. 7.

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opinion that Rum has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bu-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquite and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god." 776 [796 782]

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."[53] The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Gorer, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Gorer considers It-bo-mo to be female,[54] but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pum-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest 776 224

53. op. cit. p. 337.
54. op. cit. p. 296.

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild [illegible] Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called [illegible]-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

● 782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize; sama, a kind of white millet; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly [278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[783 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught 782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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793 The Han-bu-ai from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [157 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [182] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [197 Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535 and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [178 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hö."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
[792 the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it
787] are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

792 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[58]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293] wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

58. op. cit. p. 479.

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[56]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

56. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[784] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering; [787] then I scatter chi and prophecy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(h) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

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up the entire skin. The blood is not used at all. On the little table that is against the wall the Tormas are deposited and in front of them the two butter-lamps. The order of the Tormas is as follows: (See the drawing figs. 20 & 21) 1. Rum-thing-bo-a-mu, the wife of the supreme God. 2. Rum-thing-bo-a-bo, the Supreme God. 3. Nyom, the daughter-in-law. 4. Rum-thing-bo-ta-gri-kōb, the son of the Supreme God. 5. San-tug-kan-dro-mu (San-tug is a place below Algara; Kan-dro-mu is evidently like the Tibetan bKa-gro-ma, a sky fairy.) 6. Don-dyō-chi-log, another spirit who personifies both the intoxicating drinks, dyō and chi. Each of these six deities has on either side of it two servants who are called Bya-ro. Torma number 2, which represents the Supreme God, is the largest. It is about five inches high, of oval shape and is decorated with ten small lumps of butter as is shown in the drawing. Torma number 1, the wife, is smaller, being about four inches high and round in shape with the same decorations of butter. Tormas number 3 to 6 are similar to number 1, except that they are three inches high only. In front of this row are three Ka to, Tormas number 7, 8 & 9. In a squarish socket five cone shaped objects are placed. These are perhaps symbolical of the five-peaked mountain, but we could find out nothing more definite about them. Torma number 10 is a deity, Ka-to-sam or Gon-hiu-so. It is about two inches high, conical in shape, and decorated with streaks of butter. The Tormas of the Bya-ro servants are all alike, a little smaller and devoid of decorations. Before the table on which are placed the Tormas and the butter-lamps, there are five bamboo vessels and a wooden cup filled with chi. The cup, which stands fourth from the left, has its rim decorated with three little lumps of butter and is called San-dyō. We notice here again the names "chi" and "dyō" borne by the sixth deity. In front of these vessels there is a second small table, and six piles of rice placed on six banana leaf-plates lie on it. On top of each pile of rice are deposited a rib of the sacrifice and tiny pieces of the heart, liver, lung, spleen and kidneys. The number SIX is therefore a standard,—there are six principal gods, six chi containers, six piles of rice and six pieces of meat.

A banana leaf-plate containing rice is placed behind the skin on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh had been placed.

[Text continues on p. 63]

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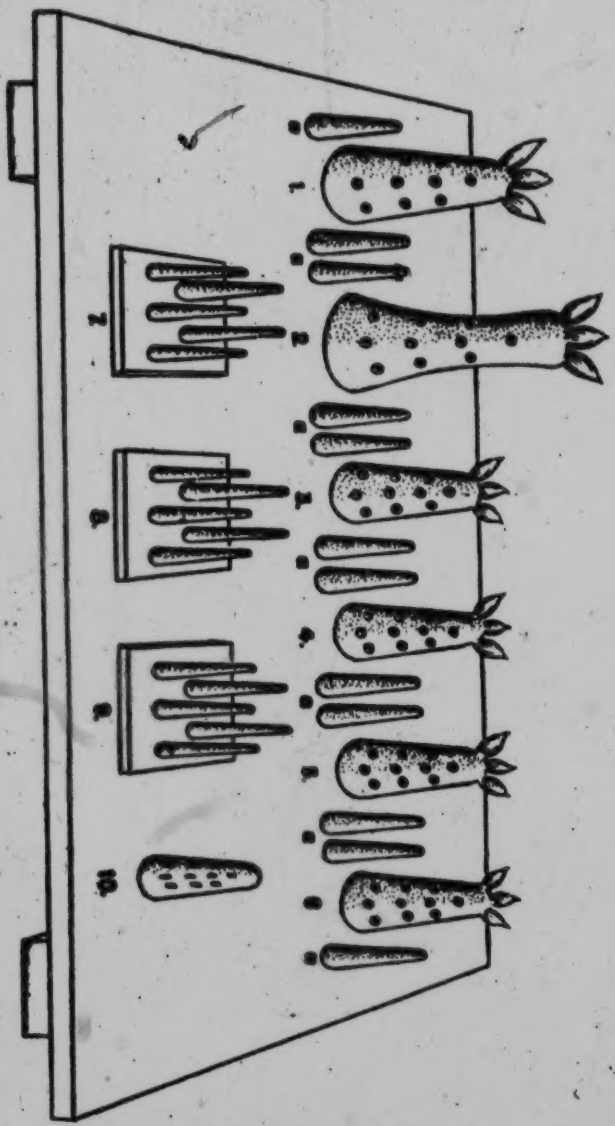

Fig. 20, Tormas of the gods

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Fig. 21, The cattle sacrifice

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On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miă song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [88]

60. sa her rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dnug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pă blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyăr pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

deng dzăn dong dăm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzăn dang
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu dăm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzăn dong hiu dăm dong hiu o! ŏn sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miă song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

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776 I offer the smoke of incense. Come hither! To the father and to
755 the mother I offer gold Torma, I offer money Torma; I offer,
782 I offer, I offer incense to San tug kan dro mu; come hither!
I offer incense; come hither! I offer to Chi, the millet beer spirit, to the rice offering spirit, to Dyö, the millet beer spirit; come hither! Verify this, O God, that we are sick. Come hither and tell it; come here and say it. How the head is racked with pain, the loins ache, the body, the hands, the feet are paining and the belly is aching, this O God verify. Come hither and state it. How the demons bite that examine ye gods; come here and tell it. In this manner I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person. As a substitute for the body and the soul I offer this bull. I offer this substitute of life; I sacrifice this bound bull as a substitute for the body. I sacrifice this bound bull to Ge bu."[60a]

[539] 60a. nyom mu (Daughter-in-law of the Supreme God). yab yum pong Father, mother (Tibetan names for the whole family of the God.)

sang blong ga kög ma o! yab yum dyär pa dong
I offer smoke of incense! Come here! To Father, Mother I offer gold Torma.

som pa dong dzän dong hiu fat ma o
I offer money Torma, I offer! I offer!

San tug kan dro mu sang blong ga kög gad mao.
To San tug Kan dro mu offer of incense! Come here!

plö blong ga kög gad mao!
offer of incense, come here!

chi log so log sang dyö ma djin blong ga
Millet beer (spirit), Rice offer (spirit), Millet beer (spirit) offer!

kög gad mao so yu song dog non rum dyop ga plö buo dön ga
Come here! That we are sick, examine this O God now. Come here and tell us.

plö buo sareb song adyak non
Come here and say it. How the head aches,

achyang dog non me so dog non a go a tong dog
the loins pain, the body pains, hands and feet pain,

ta bak dog a yu rum pong dyop ga plö buo!
the belly aches. O God examine these things. Come here and tell it.

an sareb song mung nöng ttug bang ga rum dyop ga plö buo
How the demons bite examine that ye gods. Come here and tell it.

alom bö mad big djäk chim yu re söm
In this way I sacrifice this bound bull for the sick person.

me sö löm sa lo löm big bu
As a body substitute, as a soul substitute I sacrifice this bull.

sok löm bu me sö löm
I sacrifice this substitute of life, as a body substitute

big djäk bu mo Ge bu long big long djäk bu mo.
this bound bull I sacrifice. To the Ge bu, this bull, this bound bull I sacrifice."

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family ; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely : Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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755 782 776 From the Gu-gu Bong-thing we procured the text of another prayer said during the sacrifice of a sick person: "Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö, Gom shi, Gom yu gods! (invocation). The earth was created, the water was created, the whole world was created. The millet beer offering chi and the rice offering so were created. The Tög bu ta she was created. Come hither, ye spirits. For the benefit of the creatures, of the world, and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner. Against suffering and harm I sacrifice. For myself I sacrifice. To the house-hold gods I sacrifice. As it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation, so must we sacrifice. Then to the deities of this house (of the sick man), to the Great God of the aTzam sacrifice, to the gods [774] of the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man), to the Darmit[61]

[539] 61. Fa dong dju fa dong dö
Fa dong dju and Fa dong dö (names for the male and female family gods: dong is the tribal name; dju is the male Himalayan mountain spirit; dö is the female spirit, that comes from the river).

gem shi gom yu rum lyang it ung it
Gom shi and Gom yu gods! The earth was created, the water was created,

lyang sög döm it chi log so log it
the whole world was created. Millet beer offering, rice offering were created.

lyang tög bu ta she it ga.
Then Tög bu ta she was created. (This is Tak bo thing or Ta she thing so often mentioned, who was the first man or the son of the Supreme God Ta she thing.)

plö sog döm long ming
Come here! (invitation to the spirits). For the creature's interests of the

dam ga son dön dog ga alom sug bam
whole world and of the whole existing creation I sacrifice in this manner.

adog anot sa pe ka sug bam
Against suffering and harm I sacrifice.

ga do sug to bam rum dar ngag to bam
For myself I sacrifice also. To the household gods I sacrifice at once.

yang ayit plö nöng
Likewise as it has been handed down from the beginning of earth's creation

sug gad bam along do do li rum
thus must we make sacrifice. Now to the deities of this house, to the

atzam athing rum
Great God of the aTzam sacrifice (aTzam sacrifice is the name of the sacrifice which is laid on the bull's forehead, as we saw above),

mung gung maa la rum pong darmit rum pong
to the soul and the life-spirit (of the sick man) gods, Darmit gods,

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and the Dartik gods, to the water and the flood gods, to all the gods together I sacrifice now. To our life-spirits and soul gods, to Darmit, the god of life's destiny, to Alat and Ayek, the gods of procreation, to the benefactors of the souls, to the gods who lend the strength of life, I must sacrifice, since I know how to do so. The god of my personal destiny is witness; if I do not sacrifice—then may a long illness come. But if I do know how to perform the right sacrifice—that is a godly thing. If I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice but sacrifice, that is a devilish thing. If I do not perform the right sacrifice—then may the demons come here. In this manner, O Ayek and Alat, come to this spot here. Traitors shall we be to the ancestral gods if we, the descendants, sacrifice in this (wrong) way. Thus we sacrifice (rightly) as is our duty. As our ancestors did—so do we honour (the gods) We, the living, set on this spot(bull's head) millet beer and[61].

[539]

61a. dartik rum pong
Dartik gods (both are supposed to be female and male messengers, who bring news to the priest who performs the sacrifice; they are familiar deities of the Lepchas)

ung fat ung ghum rum pong nug ngag la bum
to the water and the flood gods, to them altogether I sacrifice now.
dö dö dum bi dum nyong rum pong khing tsung darmit rum pong
Our own life-spirits and soul gods, god of life's destiny, Darmit,
ayek alat rum pong dnö bön pu rum pong
gods of procreation, Ayek and Alat, gods as benefactors of the soul,
ung han pu rum pong djü la mat mong
the gods who lend the strength of life; if I know how to sacrifice, so
nug yu gong nön dö dö khing tsung go nöng nug ma yön gong
I must do it. The god of my personal destiny knows it; if I do not
nön dö dö a rö a riom pö cho djü la nag pö
sacrifice, then may a long illness come, come. But if I do know
gong la rum gönn
how to perform the right sacrifice, then is that a godly thing.
djü la nug ma yö nöng gong na mung gönn
But if I do not know how to perform the right sacrifice that is a demonish thing.
dö dö nug la ma yöng gong na mung ni gom
If I do not perform the right sacrifice, then shall the demon be here.
a lum nug dönn ga ayek alat pö
In this way and at this place Ayek and Alat come here!
nyö ting ma rum gönn go yu gab djong
We shall not become traitors to the ancestral gods, if we,
ani nöno nung ga su gad shö bu ma yuk
the descendants, sacrifice in this way. It is our duty to sacrifice thus.
dö ting ga ning long fat ma yuk gum
As our ancestors did, so we also do honour in this way.
ga yu nun nön nug dönn ga chi log so log mat nön.
We, the living, set on this spot (head of the bull) millet beer and rice-offering.

755 rice-offerings. Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestors in ancient
782 times did—so do we now. We do not know how to speak in
776 this world; but we have arranged the sacrifice. As this world's life-spirit we, creatures, hold the branches of the Na sö and Na ling trees. We, the sons of Bong-thing, the Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. That is the place to carry the Na sö and Na ling branches which I take consciously. Now I swear an oath to Ta she tak bo thing. Therefore I push a stone into the earth and I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth (as witnesses of the oath). In this place I take the oath. I do it in our own interest. Today, in this very place I take the oath. The paths of the demons are barred. Through the wonderful powers of Ta she tak bo thing I offer this sacrifice. Henceforward we offer a compensation, a bodily substitute. Send no more suffering to this person."[61b]

[539] 61b. Fat bam a re a thing a nö sa dal thing gung dö si syit
Thus we sacrifice. As our ancestor did since ancient times,
plö nöng sug bam
so we also perform the sacrifice.
sug döm lyang ga go yusöng dön ma hön go yu rum
In this world we do not know how we should speak. We have arranged
tak so sog
the sacrifice (rum, god, has also the meaning of sacrifice). As this
döm löng ming tang ga son chio nin cho sa liang ga na sö na ling
world's life spirit we, creatures, hold here branches of the Na sö and Na ling
nom bong thing höb
trees (similar to the Nepalese Panisage and Sau tree). We, Bong-thing sons,

bong thing la mi höb nöng ga sog döm ga
we, Bong-thing sons of fire, hold them in our hands. Here in this place carrying
na sö na ling nom hö nöng go tsam nöng ga.
the Na sö na ling branches, I take hold of them consciously.
ta she tak bo thing riak to long tang.
To Ta she tak bo thing I swear an oath. I push a stone into the earth.
bu tsum bu yak to nön
I plant a beautifully decorated bamboo in the earth. (This ceremony takes place at the swearing and oath taking, so that the oath is sworn over the stone and the bamboo, which are placed side by side.)
sug döm riak to sön tön do ga
Here in this place I take the oath. In our own interest I do it.
sa rong sa ni riak are to nön sog döm ga
Just today I take the oath here. Thus here in this place
mung sa lom chat are tak bo she thing sa
the demons' ways are barred. Now through Tak bo she things' wonder-
a dyön sa löm nöng to Along ren me sö löm
powers, I bring this sacrifice. From now on, a bodily substitute, a
sa lö löm bo son arcka gi dök ma hin
compensation we give. Send no more suffering to this person."

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The ceremonies are the same as those described above. 782 ●
Each Bong-thing has his own texts. The general scheme is, 776
however, the same. Emphasis is always laid on the claim 773
that they are based on the old traditions. The following text proves this in a particular manner :

"The genesis of Chi, the genesis of the intoxicating drink Dyö. This arose from an old tradition. The place of origin is where the Sang li and Sang log trees originated. In the interest of the whole world and for our use, O messenger of God, come hither. Tak bo thing, the wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world. Now again come down for the creation of the world. Like the tradition of the Rong, the tradition of the sons of Bong-thing came in place of the Bamboo books. It is the custom of the ten Rong sons to make a synopsis of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the water, and of the whole world.[62] The world of the

62. "Fiang it dyö it
Chi's genesis, Dyö's intoxication genesis! (fiang is millet beer, and is looked [539]
on as female; dyö is an intoxicating drink, made from a substance different than millet, and is looked on as a male).

lung tän o ba nang plö — sang li sang log cho sa lyang ga plö
This arose from an old tradition. — The place of origin is where the Sang li

Sang log pair of trees originated! (Several holy trees are known. Na-ö and Na-ling were already mentioned. Two others are called Mong-chial and Sö-lario. They make three bundles of branches from these trees. One is planted in front of the altar. The Mun or Bong-thing holds the two others in his hands when he wishes to prophesy. These holy trees are expressly created and handed to men by God for ritual purposes. This is an analogy of the tree of the world).

ang dön tum ga — son sa dän dog ga rum fig rum plö
In the interest of the whole world and for our use, messenger of God come here! (fig rum is the messenger or servant of God).

Tak bo thing sa a dyön rum — lyang it ga da mu
Tak bo thing, wonder-power-god, came down for the creation of the world.

lyang it ga da — rong sa lung tän
For the creation of the world come down here. — As the Rong tradition, the

bong thing hob sa po mik po thong chio — sa lung tän plö
Bong-thing sons' tradition, came in place of the bamboo books. The synopsis

lyang it — ung it — yang ming yang sang
of the tradition of the creation of the earth, of the creation of water, of the creation of the whole world

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782 776 demons also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, a loving and adequate blessing to all. According to the origin of the [773] tradition of our ancestors, our grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren must perfectly act. Then only shall we be blessed. If we fail to act in this manner [788] it will bring us no good. The Dar gods will destroy the heart. But if we act in the manner prescribed, our ancient forbears, gods of destiny—the Darmit—will prepare an abundance of good things. If we do not know how to act in the right manner, the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, will always be angry at heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum, is pleased always, the heart will always find joy. The Primeval God, the God of abundance, will himself give us the joy. The god, Fat dzag yö sa fi, will be pleased always. If all of us, creatures, perform the adoration through sacrifice, we shall obtain the rich rewards of the sacrifice. If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured by sacrifice we shall be given a house.[82a]

[539] 82a. to pong sa lung tän rong höb ga ti sa tim bam mung sa sog
is the custom of the ten Rong sons. The world of the demons
dömm are ga bam mung ka tön sö pe tyo
also exists here. The Mung give, in truth, loving and
gön ga tag göng sa mön lam ma tong dö do abu amu sa lung tän plo
adequate blessing to all. As our ancestors' tradition
nong sa ga yu sön nin höb song ni tönön sug lang bam sö lang bam
originated thus, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren
must act accordingly, and indeed perfectly act.
ga yu chin lob top cho. sug ma gön na log non
Then shall we receive blessings. If we do not act so it will be bad.
rum dar pong la sömm du chogu yu sug lang bam dö do niu thing sa yo
The Dar gods will kill the heart. If we act so, our ancient ancestors
king tzum darmit rum pong la ayot ni chio go yu sug ma
gods of destiny, the Darmit, will prepare abundance. If we do not
gön gong na da lyang sa kyu rum
know how to act accordingly the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la sum kio cho da lyang sa kyu rum
will always have an angry heart. If the God of heaven, Sa kyu rum,
na la go gong sum riu cho ayot rum
is always pleased, the heart will be happy. The God of abundance,
pum rum hö do nöm chio. fat dzag yö sa fi rum na la go hio
the Primeval God himself will give it. Fat dzag yö sa fi god will always be pleased.
go yu sog dömm ga son min nöng fat yu gong na
If we all in this world, if we creatures perform the adoration through sacrifice,
fat sa ayot tap chio
then shall we obtain the riches of the sacrifice.
Chiö rum ayot ayit rum fat yu gong
If the God of heaven, the God of abundance, is honoured through sacrifice
li tap chio dö do nin nyu sug gang
then shall we obtain a house. If we accomplish much work in our fields

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If we accomplish a great amount of work in our fields we shall obtain an abundance of things. Darmit (god) will always grant us a happy destiny. If the lines in our foot and palms are worn out through much work, we shall obtain an abundance of things. If you do not understand how to work, you will not obtain the fruits of blessing. We honour Dar by an adoration of God. I shall perform this work until I sweat blood. Thus I work. A handful, a finger-tip-ful of the sacrifice is offered to the gods of procreation in the other life. Take it, O God, as many sacrifices. These are the fruits of the earth. All people together offer rice. When we sacrifice, many should do it together. That is the right way. God will then be at peace. But if we do not do it, then the gods of procreation will be displeased with us. We, living this life, must eat and work. If we do not work, God will not love us. The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.[62b]

62b. ayot top chio — dö do king tzum darmit na la go chio [539]
we shall obtain abundance. — A good fate, Darmit god will always grant us.

dyang dzum — pö dzum — sïd dyet sug gan sa — ayot top chio
If our foot and hand-lines are all worn out through much works, we shall obtain abundance.

sug ma gön na mong — gong nö chiu
If you do not understand how to work you will not obtain

lop apot ma top na — rum sa chiong — dar sö chiong
the fruits of blessings. — As adoration of God we honour Dar.

nïet sug vi ci fïet nöng ga — sug bö nang yug sug
I will do this work till I sweat blood. — Thus I work.

mö tnö a ping ga — ayek rum ga — go ri go chion dza
In the other life to the gods of procreation, a handful, a fingertipful

apöt — rum ga blad nom pö tat chio
of the sacrifice is offered. — God, take it as many sacrifices.

apot sog dam are ga bam — mang sa min de pö nöng
The fruits of this earth are of this kind. — All people together offer rice.

sa hö töng sa sug lang adyap — do sug gad gang na
When we sacrifice, then many should do it together. — Then is it right.

rum na la — apo ni chio — sug ma gön na
For God it will then be peace. — If we do not do it, then will the

ayek alat rum na la ga yum hium non ne. — tnö are ga bam ba sug la yo sam
gods of procreation be displeased with us. — We, living in this life,

la yong gad chio — sug la ma yu na — gang la rum na la
must work and eat. — If we do not work, then God will

a go na mad ni rum pum thing hö do sa dön ga — lödnan chiong ta tnïd dö
never love us. — The Primeval God himself says that we should go at the right time.

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will [761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[82c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who [784] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 82c go yu ma dyak ne — djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. — At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tzäd ga la a gün — lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. — When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön — ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut — ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tzäd ga — abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe plö lad chiang gam — anam — anom aköb ason
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom — li ma top — sag ni rum sa sag ni tag zaam che lat aon
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[82]

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

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782 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting
796 god must be performed. The animal is already carved up
224 in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit
[784] over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[64]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god
773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

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136 Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-
[71] buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The
232] Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not
262 kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are
825 they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bōn-mān-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bōn-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bōn-sacri are the Iśdini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against
[782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection.

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 786 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyusfaat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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782
river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After 796
the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice. [515]

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the 273
sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of 796
millet. The second is Dyō, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dōn-dyō-chi-log, who [776]
is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is 773
of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset 273
the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was 796
brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 346.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796
estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [17]
Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796
to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782
his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773
ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (nut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 100 sq.

796 And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[773] the commencement of all offering."[75]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
[776 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
273] sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[76]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[76a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
796 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
782 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
171 the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

75. Stocks, op. cit. p. 356.
76. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
76a. op. cit. p. 178.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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Jensen has reported, it is likewise evident, that they occurred as a repetition of that first killing, from which new life was engendered.

Thus it is clear then, that the slaughtering of cattle which Zarathustra again and again condemned, was the imitating and repeating of the indeed cruel, but—blessed killing of the original bull.

And in the closest connection with this, Zarathustra condemned in the same place the Haoma sacrifice, although, it is true he does not mention the name Haoma, but uses instead, an old unmistakable title of the Haoma.

This simultaneous mentioning of the Haoma endorses my opinion that with the words, 'the bull must be killed,' the sacrifice of the bull in the Mitra cult and its cosmic meaning are alluded to." This bull is said to be identical with Haoma.[77]

Very correctly does Lommel lay emphasis on the drawing of ethnological and prehistorical parallels for the explanation of the ritual. Our case is specially instructive for such an interpretation. The beliefs of the Rong and their rites prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the cult of the intoxicating drink and the cult of the bull are not identical, but are two altogether independent cults, and moreover that they are not the imitation of the original offering of the deity itself. Among the oldest ethnological tribes this mystification is not to be found; but it is certainly so among the younger peoples especially among those with the peculiar mystery-religion. Others believe that the intoxicating Haoma has been supplanted by the milk-haoma which links with an old milk-mystery. The Mithra religion is Apolonic, sober, formalistic; the Iranian Gatha-religion on the contrary, is Dionysiac, and is familiar with the Haoma delirium, with ecstacies, trances, and the wandering of souls in a state of trance.

Among the Indo-Iranians the Soma-Haoma sacrifice was performed in spring time for all the gods.[78] We have pointed out that exactly the same thing happens in the case of the Rong. The Rong-thing and the Mun, by partaking of

77. H. Lommel, Mithra und das Stieropfer, in Paideum, Bd. III, H. 6/7, Juni 1948, p. 216 sq., p. 212.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 449 sq.

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796 782 171 Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

273 A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyō, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

273 171 The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 62, 4; XV, 8, 95, 4.
82. X, 34. 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

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773 171 and cut it to pieces. Then he cleared the path for the waters so that they could flow freely into the sea.[96]

Indra-Vrtra corresponds to the Iranian Tishtar-Apaosha. After the fight between them both had raged with unabated fury for three days, he appeared weary and about to give in. Whereupon he cried, "If men would perform sacrifices, I still could win." They therefore offered the Haoma sacrifice because of which the hero gained strength and conquered the demon. Indra had also obtained superb strength through the drinking of Soma. In the Rong myths the stimulant Chi had to be offered to God in order that he might be passified and let the floods abate. As the serpent is again linked in another way with the flood, the snake king as leader of the river Rung-nyo and the subsequent flood;—we do not believe that the Rong have, in this case, taken over Vedic Hindu myths, but have handed down, independently, their own legends, which are very slightly influenced by modern Hinduism.

The second motif is the saving of a pair or of a few people, who either saved themselves by taking refuge on a mountain-top or in a vessel. We have acquainted ourselves earlier with the Rong legend (page 40 sq.). In Atharvaveda (19·39·8) this event is recorded as having occurred in the Himalayas, "There was the arrival of the vessel; there was the peak of the Himalayas; there was immortality in sight; there grows the Kushta grass." Shatapatha Brahmana (1·8·1/10) describes how Manu was saved in a ship. According to the Vendidad of the Iranians, Jamshed (Yima) was locked up in a "vara" by Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme God, in order that he might be saved from the great flood.

As the myths of the flood occur among so many Asiatic peoples (in the Near, Middle and Far East) there is no conclusive parallel about the saving of mankind as described in the myths of the Rong and Indo-Iranians. These legends could be drawn from several sources.

● 782 In the cult of the Rong, the sacrificing of bulls plays an outstanding part. For both, the living (during illness) and for the dead (in funeral ceremonies), the bulls must lose their

96. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 133 sq.

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

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776 Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow.
782 These sacrifices are common among the different Naga
171 tribes.[101] Lepchas, who during the war came to these parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tedencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11·1·8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse ; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god,
[776] Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. G. R. Stoner, The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1950, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[102] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult. [776]

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796
Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782
The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171
the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793
such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

102. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaiischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepálese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
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Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was 764
kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse 789
was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, 782
four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'. L

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in 771
many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as 764
Pōn. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim 782
says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pōn-pōn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pōn* for three days and nights.' L

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after 775
death through subterranean passages to the local deities of 823
Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages. L

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in 771
Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Nga*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically 778 touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark [783 chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting 785] and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A [779] couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber 289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [844] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; [783] they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away.
796 On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The
● 783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth
[843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot
[585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the [166] body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are [183] scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

grain are burnt with the corpse; a sort of long-handled shovel is 764
used to make these offerings and they are thrown on to the pyre 766
a little at a time, the officiating lama counting out loud and finishing up with a shout. The lama counts up to five ten times, up to seven five times and up to eight ten times. A pig, or very occasionally an ox, is killed at the house and this is put on to the pyre as food for the corpse after the corpse has been consumed. This animal is not usually consumed completely but merely cooked; the people who gathered the wood for the pyre are given this meat as their fee; if there is no meat they are given money. The relations of the dead man must stay by the pyre until the ashes are quite extinct.

All the unrelated people who have accompanied the family to the burning place are given a meal of rice, and a small gift of money —usually one or two annas—is given to a representative of each household present. Similar presents are also given to those who attend a burial if the mourners can afford it. On the way back from the disposal of a corpse a small bonfire is built for the mourners to jump over, and a knife or some other piece of iron is put in the [783] doorway of the house for people to step over; both these precautions are taken to disinfect the mourners from the possible magical contagion of death.

Except that the corpse is not dressed and anointed in the house, 764
but only when it is brought to the place designated for burial, the preliminaries for burial are exactly the same as those for burning. The corpse is carried in the basket to the burial place by one man, a near relation if possible; a husband must always carry his wife and a son his mother. As well as the friends and relations of the deceased a Mun accompanies the buriers. When the party arrive at the chosen site the corpse is placed on the ground and is washed and anointed with the mixture of butter, cloves, nutmeg and camphor, and wrapped in a new cloth which is arranged so as to cover the face. Then a circular grave about the height of a man is dug; a big stone is put at the bottom and the sides are lined with stones and four ropes are placed against the four corners. While these preparations are being made the surviving spouse or eldest son will stay by the corpse and talk to it saying: 'We are preparing this new house for you.' The body is put into the grave still sitting in the basket, orientated to face Kinchenjunga; then on the top of the grave and corpse is put a big flat stone and on the top of that four cooking stones supporting another flat stone. On the top of this is placed a little white stone which serves as an indication that the place is a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken" or
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is good.
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he [783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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by wild boars during the rainy season—was erected with the help of some twigs and dry leaves, the idea probably being, that this nest should provide a temporary shelter for the *Mŭk nyam* who according to the belief of some Lepcha clans, stays for seven days on the burial ground. When a woman died, a small hand-loom was sometimes placed near the tomb. 764

After closing the grave, an egg was broken on the tombstone and some rice as well as a bamboo container filled with Lepcha beer (*ci*) were placed on the hillock as a food-offering for the dead. Then all tools which were used for digging the pit were beaten against each other for a while and at last all the wooden handles of these instruments were removed and piled up near the grave, while only the iron parts were kept to be used again.

When returning from the funeral, the mourners had to put up obstacles—as already mentioned before—to hinder the demon *Mă zóm mung* from following them. When reaching the house, everybody who had attended the funeral had to undergo a ritual purification. To this purpose an ox was killed and some of its blood was poured into a vessel and strained with water; the right foreleg of the sacrificed animal was laid aside, to be used in the ceremony which commenced after darkness had fallen, while the rest was prepared as food for the guests. Then a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* entered the house, in which the death had occurred and performed its cleansing, going into every room and sprinkling in all corners some of the ox blood, with the help of a whisk made of nine different kinds of grass. Then all foodstuff which had lain close to the dead, had to be removed and at last everybody before entering the house had to be purified by waving the grass whisk over his head; this action was known as *Phik* or *A phik*. 764 783

During the night the ceremony of "recalling the *Mŭk nyam*" had to be performed and in some of the more outlying localities this rite is sometimes still practised. Only a *Mŭn* can perform this rite. In former times, before starting her invocations, the *Mŭn* had to walk in the evening to the grave and beat several times with a stick against the tombstone. Returning to the house, she took her seat with the back to a wall and facing the door; it was regarded as auspicious, if she could face in this position Mt. Kanchenjunga. 764

Then the right foreleg of the ox, which had been prepared previously, was placed in a basket and brought into the room. Only the upper part of the leg was used, while the part from the knee downward was cut away. The basket was set near the *Mŭn* and a rope wound around the joint of the leg, while the other end was fastened with a

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *choten*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu. 487

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation. 346 [784]

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment. [249]

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on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

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551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law
784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than
[576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger
602 brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *azong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

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756 sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off and I offer them *chi* and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower-bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel as though a heavy burden were pressing over my shoulders and as if my flesh were being poked with sticks—zinga—zinga—zinga—zinga—; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and walk outside in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put the necklace on me the gods would be angry and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed, even the children. I blow into each person's face and on the offerings; then I scatter *chi* and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half-year. After the prophecy I recover consciousness but not till cock-crow the next day do I feel all right again.[5]

'When I am called in in the case of illness the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animal or insect or person, depending on which devil it is; thus Lum dong *moong* appears as a pig, Sor *moong* as a dirty ragged old woman, Arot *moong* as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious.

[784] 'A Mun must on no account touch a human corpse; should he do so the god will depart and he will be very ill for two months and lamas have to perform ceremonies to cure him. This is the only occasion on which the spirit will leave a Mun. A dead Mun is buried in the ordinary way and his soul has to be conducted to the *rum lyang* (place of the gods) in the normal manner; the gods

[5] All Mun do this ceremony twice a year (no more and no less) but on different days; informants agree that their prophecies are never mutually contradictory; they are always fairly generalized.

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241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of
782 charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can
786 drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *ʒo-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafêt* is offered with the new
782 *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

look at grain drying in the sun. Until that time grain must be dried over the fire; for if the gods of Mayel saw grain drying in the sun before they had been offered any they would be angry and would not come the next year and there would be a bad harvest. Until everybody has made the sacrifice people who go where they may see rice drying in the sun—across the river or to Mangan or Gangtok—must cover their face with a cloth. If a man who has not made his sacrifice were ordered by the Mandal to go abroad where he might see rice being dried, he would have a valid excuse for not going and a substitute would have to be found for him. Should a man by any chance see crops drying he would be considered to have *amik-her*, which is almost the evil eye; if a man with *amik-her* were to look on a field the people of Mayel would be terrified as if by an enemy and would run away and would not return next year. Therefore a man who has accidentally seen drying crops would live in the jungle or in a field-house or cardamum field until the rice of the neighbourhood was gathered; if he should be a person who would normally sacrifice he would not do so that year. To avoid this danger Lepchas who have to go to Mangan at the harvesting season only go at night so that they will see no drying crops. For a man with *amik-her* to look at the harvest would be *nam-toak*—a year of disaster—as bad as if incest had been committed. When people have performed their sacrifices they send and tell the Mandal who then sends the *gyapõn* round with the message that now all have sacrificed and crops can be dried in the sun. All the inhabitants of Lingthem, Panung, Liklyang and Salim have to wait till they get the message before they can expose crops. Should anybody expose his crops before all were ready the Mandal would fine him Rs. 15; but such a case has not occurred in the last twenty years, though some are known of earlier. Besides dry rice, maize and three varieties of millet cannot be exposed to the sun. This prohibition does not apply to the other sorts of millets nor to barley, buckwheat, and wet rice. Grains must also not be exposed until a sort of wild grass which grows on the far side of the Talung river has turned yellow.

The Lepchas of Zongu are very serious about this prohibition on seeing drying crops in the sun; it is a custom which has descended from the ancestors of our ancestors. 'The people outside Zongu say they don't care; "the grain is in the sun when it is on the stalk; what is the difference when it is cut?" they say; but we people in Zongu have always acted in this way.' For Lepchas

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

24| living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible
784 to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

24| The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

iii

224 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called
782 Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hunter crouching behind and speaking very slowly and softly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken that no woman sees the animal's head; if she did the hunter would have no success in future.

To know how to sacrifice to Pong *rum* it is necessary to learn how to, and to receive *loong*; for this purpose the novice goes to anybody who knows—maybe his father or some other relation or a friend—taking with him *chi* and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee. Great care must be taken that no woman is present at this time. When the older man sees the gifts he enquires what they are for and is told it is to learn how to sacrifice. The older man then arranges the sacrifice and tells the neophyte to sit with his back to him: he must not look but must listen most attentively. After that the neophyte on the next suitable occasion will make the sacrifice; the instructor will be near him and if he makes a mistake will nudge him, whereat the sacrifice must be stopped short. Subsequently the neophyte will take another lesson, continuing until he is word perfect and has received his *loong* and can sacrifice on his own.

A person who has once been to the communal sacrifice to Pong *rum* should continue to do so all his life; he may, however, give it up, in which case he is liable to be troubled with poltergeist manifestations by Pong *rum*, who anyhow if he is displeased with a hunter will pursue him whistling, and the thump of heavy stones falling will be heard, though no stones are seen to fall. It is even preferable for hunters' children to continue the ritual.

Kurma used to hunt but does so no longer and has given up going to the sacrifice to Pong *rum*; for he is afraid that should he go and then not hunt he would become mad. As things are he is somewhat persecuted by Pong *rum*; he describes these persecutions with the greatest detail and indifference. He says quite freely that he does not care a bit.

Near his house is an orange tree and some time ago on a moonlight night he heard distinctly the sound of big stones being thrown under this tree; but there was nothing to be seen so he knew it was Pong *rum*; he therefore returned to the house, lit some incense leaves and butter and came out and offered it to the god saying 'Please forgive us; we have no intention of hunting'.

'Only a month ago when some friends were in my house with me drinking *chi* I heard my dog which was tethered some way

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child.

755
The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342 Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356 April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249 third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841 plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784 who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249 offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244] for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244] finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249 may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so-called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

R. DE NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ
Kalimpong, Bengal

224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which
177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise,
224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

411 The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*sä lí*). It is
always made of bamboo, with a string (*sä lí grím*) made either of
[283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kü ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kä fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pün hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also
278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose
224 is aconite (*pä kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo să rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

775 At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a 764 *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

[784] When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water ; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and 755
soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take 782
them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." [774] The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be [688] a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the [784] meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about [776] fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techö-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mög-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782
776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will
[761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[88c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who
[789] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 88c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ha tsäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tsäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe pö lad chiang gam amom amom ahöb amom
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyum li ma top mg ni rum sa mg ni tag mam che lat man
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[68] 796 782 796 782

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms: "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us. 294 [776]

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." [784] Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god. [776]

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has [784 841]

68. Report from Kalimpong.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

782 796 224 been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer: "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[84]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

411 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god 773 of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

84. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 surmounted with drapery of many colours, stands in the middle of
778 the floor of the storey above. The four prayer-wheels practically touch each other; there is about a yard of free ground between the wheels and the side walls, and a larger space between the doorway and the first wheel. The *lha-gong* is primarily the place of worship of the nuns—*in-é-bu*—and they are meant to be responsible for the services and good order of this place. The big wheels are turned by people sitting down, and there are wooden handles attached to the base which make this operation easier. Each time one of the big wheels completes a revolution a small bell is rung. The wheels are covered with paper of a vaguely Chinese design, representing fantastic flowers and goddesses.

The first storey is approached by an external wooden staircase on the east side. It leads first of all into a corridor with an unused
[783 cooking place; at the back of that is a small and completely dark
785 chamber called *tyang-gong* which is employed for mystic fasting and contemplation and also for the weekly ceremony of *kong-so klon* which is performed, at considerable risks, it is believed, to the officiant, to cleanse the monastery and neighbourhood of those devils which are infesting it.

The main first-storey room is very similar to the one below, except that the books and images on the altar are different. This first-floor altar is flanked by a pair of thunder-birds—*sa-dher*—resembling Chinese dragons in silhouette cut out of cardboard. A
[778 couple of books are also kept permanently on the altar. To the right of the altar is a cupboard containing the sacred book Rin-chet; this book is treated with great reverence and the cupboard which holds it receives bowls of water and *chimi* as though it were an altar. But none of the lamas of Lingthem can read this book, nor do they know the proper ceremonials which should accompany the reading. On the four supporting columns hang wooden masks such as are worn when 'devil dances' are performed; but these actual masks, though representing named supernaturals, are not made for wearing, nor are dances performed in the monastery. Suspended from the cross-beams—for there is no ceiling and the reed thatch can be seen between the beams—are a number of sacred scroll pictures (*tang-ku*) but they have suffered so much from the weather that they are practically indecipherable.

[346] To the west of the main room, above the *lha-gong* is a lumber
289 room containing paper-presses and other paraphernalia not in constant use. The Lepchas make paper out of the pounded underbark

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

781 negative results which occurred through not following their
787 instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. [756] My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with 771 harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number 795 of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible 241 that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun cere- [224] monies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun [562] ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to [782] the people of Mayel are the *lafêt* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafêt* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1] 241 785

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 785 indeed Lepchas have no word for 'virgin' and either have to say 'clean' or else directly 'a person who has not copulated.' They claim that this insistence on virginity in connection with the objects of sacrifice for the people of Mayel is a custom derived from their father's fathers; if the special bird were not killed and if the killer and the *chi*-pourer were not virgins the gods would be angry and the harvest spoiled. But, as so often in Lepcha life, theory and practice do not necessarily coincide; young children [781] are chosen to fill the rôles who it is hoped are virgin; if not—*ket ma-nin*: it doesn't matter.

776 The people of Mayel consist of seven brothers each with their own name and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are the progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayel live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants, at midday they are grown men and in the evening they are old. They all have huge goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayel is far up the Talung valley, somewhere behind Kinchenjunga; at one time in the past the road thither was open but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife. On the road to Mayel are three guardian spirits called Sok-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel Yook *rum*; he is also called Pong *rum* when hunters sacrifice to him; his younger brothers Mi-tik and Tom-tik are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals; Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex and musk deer which come from Mayel, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill.

In the country of Mayel crops grow a hundred times as big as here and it is from that country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called Mayel *fo*, birds of Mayel, and they are sent out by the people of Mayel to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when the various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the migratory birds to return to Mayel the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
[785] days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
[793] complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of
782 charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can
● 786 drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *ro-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafêt* is offered with the new
782 *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time 243 he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; [777] otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early 243 September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the 535 district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not 786 present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar') 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [187]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

house is built is soft the house-mother will die. It is bad if there is not a hill between the north and the east because you will get the wind. 342 777

'*Choten* and *Mani* ('Mani walls' and prayer flags) should never be placed to the east or the inhabitants of the house will die, they should be on the north and west. It is good if the hill behind be covered with trees. It is bad to have a red cliff behind to the south; people born in the year of the Horse or the year of the Snake will be particularly troubled. (This can be averted by elaborate ceremonies.)

'It is bad if there is standing water below the house which will reflect the light; if there is, gold, silver and copper should be put in the water. It is bad if water seeps through the ground below the house, above it does not matter. It is bad if there is a cave to the north or west; for that would be the home of Mamoo *moong* (a malevolent female devil). It is bad to be below a pass between two hills, with a land slip below you, this is a devil's road. It is bad if there is a juniper tree (*sanden koong*) to the west, . . . etc.'

When an intending builder has chosen a site which fulfils these general desiderata, he has still to find out whether that site will be propitious for him personally. To do this he digs up a small piece of earth from the intended site, concentrating fixedly all the time on the question of whether the ground is good-omened or not, [787] and takes it to a competent lama[9] who will then consult the book *Tong-yoop* and cast a horoscope to see if the site is suitable in relation to the intending builder's horoscope, reckoned by the various year-cycles.[10] If the first site chosen is not propitious others must be looked for until a suitable one is found. It consequently follows that all other considerations are secondary; it is better to be near a stream (for water for domestic use and also in case of fire) and to have suitable ground near for a field-garden, and, if possible, to be near friends and relations; but the verdict of the lamas comes first.

When the site is finally determined upon the lama carefully 342 replaces the sample of earth, and then offers *cherkem*—that is mixed grains floating in strained *chi*—which is thrown on to the ground

[9] In Lingthem only Tafoor and the two Dorjé Lapoon knew how to cast this horoscope; the Lharibu Chujen of Panung was the only lama in the neighbourhood to possess or be able to read Sachet Zai Putta. [787]

[10] See Chapter Seven, pp. 209–212) and Appendix III.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

356 much relation to what the other workers are doing. Men, women and children all work together, and the task proceeds in a rather haphazard fashion, to the accompaniment of a constant fire of jokes, most of them obscene. When the work is finished all those who have helped are given a feast.

776 Attached to some households and fields is an ambivalent supernatural called *Thyak-dum* (white head). If this supernatural is good-tempered and contented he will bring health and prosperity to the home, and possibly, though people are not so sure about this, punish marauders in the family's fields; if he is angry he will bring disease and loss to the people who neglect him. Consequently when people live in a new house they must find out if *Thyak-dum* lives there, and if so, if they can control him. His whereabouts [787] are discovered by a Mun going into meditation and seeing his presence mystically. If the house-owners can control *Thyak-dum* they will burn butter and incense leaves on some embers, and then sprinkle these embers with water and tell the supernatural to go [782] away. If this fails they will make the *lafét* sacrifice (this sacrifice recurs constantly in the ceremonies of the Mun). On a wicker winnowing tray are placed banana leaves, and on top of them three rows of ground corn, and pieces of ginger, wild bird and dried fish; this offering is dedicated by a Mun who also offers *chi* in a cup ceremonially buttered; after which the sacrifice is taken to the top of some high place and left there, uneaten.

346 In some houses however it is divined that though *Thyak-dum* is present the house-owner cannot control him. In such cases a little house has to be built for him, standing in the fields near the house. This 'devil's house' consists of a miniature Lepcha house about two feet wide, thatched and made of bamboo, raised about four feet off the ground on four bamboos. Nobody except the sacrificer (preferably a Mun, but any man who knows how and 346 is not a lama will do) must touch, or even go too near this 'devil's 782 house'; were anyone to do so they would become seriously ill. Twice a year, when the barley and when the rice is ripe, sacrifices must be placed inside this devil's house; the sacrifice consists of the fresh grain, together with meat, fish and silver money. When the new sacrifice is made the old one is removed and thrown away; the money however can be taken back into use. Besides these sacrifices a special pig must be kept penned for *Thyak-dum*; this pig is always called the pig of *Thyak-dum*. When it gets old it must be replaced by a young piglet; the old one is killed, and its cooked

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ages of fifty and thirty; the remaining seven are between twenty and thirty and for them there is still some chance of producing a child, for though copulation normally starts at or before puberty the average age for bearing the first child (worked out from the women of Lingthem) is over twenty-two; there are only three instances of a woman bearing a child before she was twenty. Most exceptionally for a primitive community it was possible in Zongu to get the exact age of every individual for the following reason. It is absolutely essential for participation in all lamaist ceremonies for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year 'animal' cycle[17] they were born, for this affects birth and marriage, the diagnosis of disease, the suitability or otherwise of individual exorcists, and many other occasions in ordinary life. Also after he has completed his third (or exceptionally his fourth) cycle—that is to say when he is 36 or 48—it is obligatory for a Lepcha to make prophetic consultation as to the hazards and misfortunes which await him in the next twelve years. Although no Lepcha can state his age in years, everybody knows their 'animal' year, and with few exceptions, which can be checked by cross-reference, the number of cycles they have completed.

I have not been able to make up my mind as to the reason for the great sterility of the Lepchas. It would seem as though it were the women rather than the men who were sterile, for in the greater number of cases of a man remarrying on account of his first wife's sterility the second wife has borne him children. A suggestion put forward by some Lepchas with whom I discussed the matter, though others considered it absolutely ludicrous, is that sterility may be due to premature copulation. The Lepchas do not recognise and have no word for physical puberty, and most of them believe that the signs of female puberty (swelling of the breasts and beginning of menses) are the result of copulation and that therefore girls have to be copulated with in order that they may develop. A number of people admitted (if they were women) copulating with men when they were only ten or eleven, or (if they were men) more or less raping young girls. A number of the sterile women however emphatically deny such premature experience, and I have no reason to suppose they were lying; and anyhow on the medical evidence it seems doubtful whether such premature experience would cause subsequent sterility, though it might render childbirth more difficult.

[17] This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; see also Appendix III.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

incur supernatural dangers, it is not the wrong-doer alone who is involved, but the whole of his family group; punishment is seen if members of a person's family die or suffer, even though the evil-doer survives himself. Indeed according to Lepcha ethics it could be said that anti-social acts are graded according to the number of people they may affect; only for acts of minor importance is there personal and individual punishment which falls on the evil-doer. 771 779

On some subjects there is agreement between the two religions, notably on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings; in both religions the supernaturals are divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral, and mostly malevolent. The supernaturals which are mostly benevolent are called gods, *rum*, those mostly malevolent devils, *moong*; but both agree that if the gods are displeased they take on a terrifying and threatening aspect, and that the best way to deal with devils is to flatter them temporarily by treating them as gods; and whether gods or devils are prayed to the ceremony always ends by begging them vehemently to *go away*. Whatever their chief aspects the supernaturals are potentially dangerous. The ambivalent supernaturals, such as *Thyak-dum*, or Hlamen Djémé (a lamaist supernatural equated with the Mun spirit), are called either *moong* or *rum* according to the personal dealings of the speaker with them at that moment. 756 771 776 779

Lamas and Mun are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams. The dreams of everybody are significant for those who have the knowledge to interpret them; the significance lies, not in the actions of the dream (as a rule), but in the seeing of certain objects which have a symbolical meaning. The causation of dreams is however different for the two religions, as is to some extent their interpretation; for the Mun dreams are sent by supernaturals, for the lamas they are the experiences of the soul released from the body by sleep; unbound by space or time the soul has experiences with the souls of other people, supernaturals and objects, and, on its return, informs the body it inhabits. For the Mun the soul is a very vague concept, practically only having an independent existence after the death of the body; the lamas however know all about souls. 756 771 779 787

The content of dreams can be divided into two classes; those that foretell some future 'natural' event, and those that foretell the presence of some, usually dangerous, supernatural. For the latter some apotropaic ceremony is usually available and in some cases essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

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essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand, collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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787 The interpretations of certain dreams are emotionally neutral: other dreams are said to be meaningless. Thus to dream that a living person is lying dead merely means that the person dreamt of is lying sleeping with a full belly. To dream that you yourself are flying means that you have inadvertently eaten birds' droppings. Meaningless dreams are dreams of running, of local landscapes, of naked people, and so on. Everybody with whom I discussed the subject denied the existence of dreams with a manifestly sexual content, whether permissive or incestuous, or of committing crimes; the only sexual dream allowed for is the woman's monthly dream of copulation with a supernatural. If a man's wife is sleeping with an unpermitted partner the man will be apprised of the fact by dreaming of the big wooden ladle which is used for pouring the water on to the *chi*; if the partner is a permitted one the man will not have this dream, but he may suffer from diarrhoea; in that case he will ask his wife to procure a portion of the 'younger brother's' clothing which he will wear; this will clear up the symptoms.

Everybody dreams to a certain extent, but this varies with the individual; it is believed that much dreaming foretells a long life, and little dreaming a short one. There is no necessity to try to recollect dreams if they are dim or forgotten on waking. According to lamaist theory the child in the womb dreams continuously about its previous incarnation; it thinks it is going to be born and makes up its mind to inform its parents of its future plans; but when the cord is cut most of this knowledge goes; just a little remains in the infant's dreams, but that too disappears before he has learned to talk.

As an illustration of the interpretation of dreams I can give two prophetic dreams which were made about me on an occasion when I was slightly unwell with a stomach upset, followed by a head-ache. Both the dreams were told to me by the dreamers as soon as I saw them, and before I had said that I had been unwell; Tafoor indeed came to see me because of the dream. He had dreamed that while we were living in the monastery he and the other lamas came up to practise their musical instruments for the reception of some great lady. The doors opened outwards instead of inwards, and beside them was some dried buckwheat. These were sure signs that there was illness in the monastery.[1]

[1] It may be of interest to record that the last three times that he saw me Tafoor said on each occasion that his heart was heavy about me and that he feared that when I left I should have some misfortune or illness. At the time

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●787 Kurma foretold my headache with the following dream: he saw me walking along the riverbank with his mother-in-law, came to salute me, and I gave him a silver rupee. Later in the day I asked him to repeat the dream which he did as follows:—'The Sahib[2] dressed in his usual clothes went to the valley with my mother-in-law. I was coming from the forest along the river and I saluted the Sahib with joined hands[3] whereupon he presented me with a silver rupee. I then said to my mother-in-law "The sahib has come to see us: what can we set before him as a present?" My mother-in-law replied "The sahib has come to walk and to fish in the river; we have nothing suitable for him—no chickens, no eggs. What can we give?" After that I woke up.'

The interpretation of the dream was fulfilled; to dream that you are given silver means that you will get a good drink of *chi*, and this was fulfilled when Kurma called on the Mandal earlier in the day to discuss village affairs with him. The mother-in-law in my company showed that I was the victim of a female devil Langteun *a-nyou* who brings head-ache and eye-ache and thirst. Any ugly or dirty or badly-dressed woman represents this devil; the fact that it was his mother-in-law was without significance.(!) Had the head-ache persisted I should have hired a Mun to drive the devil away with offerings of *chi* and incense.

776 779 The demonology and, to a lesser extent, the hagiology of lamaism and the Mun religion are unified by a system of cross-identification in the two mythologies. Devils, and to a lesser extent gods, in one mythology are equated with differently-named supernaturals with similar attributes in the other. It thus happens that supernaturals have nearly all two names at least; but for Lepchas, as has been said, names are impermanent and without significance and no discomfort is felt from this. Some extraordinary tangles result from these identifications: the most popular lamaist god, called alterna-

I put these remarks down to courtesy. In fact, however, I was taken ill within a week of leaving Lingthem and had to go into hospital almost immediately on returning home. I did not recollect Tafoor's repeated prophecies till some months later, when going over my notes.

[95] [2] The polite Lepcha term for a European is *Sé-pano*, which I believe to be a corruption of Sahib. *Pano* means a king, but the first syllable is apparently meaningless. The less polite word is *mik-dum*—white eyes. Europeans or fair people in dreams are good-omened, dirty people ill-omened.

[576] [3] The two hands cupped together and held in front of the breast is a respectful attitude and gifts must always be received with joined hands, to indicate that the gift, whatever its nature, is overpoweringly large.

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dead man's soul on its journey through the other worlds after death. 793
The Dorjé Lapoon are supposed to have renounced the things of this world; they are meant to be without property and to renounce such as they do possess; their nourishment is meant to be looked after by the other villagers; and, since they are meant to be fairly ascetic, it is expected that the Dorjé Lapoon will feast the other lamas yearly on their superfluity. Both *omʒet* and Dorjé Lapoon can perform the mystic ceremony of *kong-so klon*: this ceremony, performed fasting in a dark room to make up for arrears of duties left undone and to appease the devils in the neighbourhood, is believed to be fraught with considerable danger which would result in the death of anybody not properly qualified who tried to perform it. The rank of *omʒet* corresponds fairly closely to that of bishop; but as far as I know there is no equivalent in the Christian hierarchy to the rank of Dorjé Lapoon.

There are about twenty lamas attached to the monastery of Lingthem; eleven live permanently in the village, two others more or less permanently; the rest live in neighbouring villages. The two Dorjé Lapoon are the father of Datoop and the 'big father' of Tafoor; they are always addressed and referred to by their title. Tafoor and Ongden are *omʒet*, Tafoor being by far the more learned; Datoop is *chichembu*, Lumba *chithembu*, Jiroong *chéné*, Chudo and Pembu *kané*, Chanko (Ongden's eldest son), Chano and Takal *chapti-bu*. All the *tongpeun-bu* live in the neighbouring villages. Chano and Takal are both full-grown men—Chano is thirty and Takal fifty-seven—but they are both too stupid to rise above the lowest rank. There are four boys studying to become lamas: they are Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged eighteen, Tafoor's eldest son Chimpet, aged fourteen, Chano's eldest 'son' Mikmar, aged thirteen, and Chudo's eldest son aged four. The last named has not yet started to learn to read, but he is dressed in lama's clothes, and he plays on the floor at conducting services; this is [787] ● considered to be a most auspicious omen, and when he does start studying he should learn quickly and easily.

Corresponding with the hierarchy of lamas there is a hierarchy 792
of nuns (*in-é-bu*). Each rise in grade carries the same validating feast of a load of *chi*, 40 lbs. of grain and ten lbs. of oil or butter. The titles are similar, but they are completely pointless. Nuns cannot conduct ceremonies or perform exorcisms; in a very few of the lama's services, chiefly those connected with death, they have a subordinate role. There is no sort of compulsion or prophetic

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793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple ●787 of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

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858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

●787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

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787 fourth, twelve-year cycle to discover what is foretold for the next twelve years, and, in the event of illnesses or misfortunes being threatened, to perform the indicated apotropaic ceremonies. These consultations are repeated every twelve years. The final horoscope is cast immediately after death; this shows the cause of death, the future state of the man's soul and his next reincarnation, the most propitious mode of disposing of the body, the direction in which the body should be carried and the people who should handle it, and also what ceremonies should be performed to prevent the death-causing devil from attacking further members of the household, or, if the devil has gone elsewhere, into whose house the devil has entered.[9]

Though entirely mechanical the casting of horoscopes is an elaborate and difficult business which entails the collating and interpreting of a great number of cross-references. In Lingthem the only lamas who know how to do so are the two Dorjé Lapoon and Tafoor, and in nearly all cases it is Tafoor who is consulted.

787 805 Years are reckoned by four different and independent cycles: the most important, and the only one laymen know of is the twelve-year 'animal cycle'; next in importance comes the ten-year 'element' cycle; the importance of these two reside in the fact that a person is considered to possess the qualities of the animal and element of his year, and in horoscope conjunctions these qualities are of the greatest importance.[10] There are also two independent nine-year cycles founded on different magic squares (*mariwã and parrko*) so that, calculating by the year alone there are 9,720 different combinations. Besides the year calculations there are also calculations for the hour (of birth or death), the time (morning, midday, evening, etc.), the day, the month, the stars, the birth number, and so on. Altogether there are between ten and sixteen cross-references, depending on the elaboration of the horoscope, which can be made to check, counter-check and modify one another. Any apparent contradictions arising from the various modes of calculation are resolved by being explained as contingent.

[9] Complete horoscopes for birth, marriage and death will be found in Appendix III.

[10] The animal cycle is Rat, Ox, Tiger, Eagle, 'Thunder-bird', Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Fowl, Dog, Pig. The element cycle (each element lasts two solar years) is Fire, Earth, Iron, Water, Wood. 1937 was Ox year and the second Fire year; 1938 Tiger year and the first Earth year.

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Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions. 787 [732]

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest. 793

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects. [556]

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the 781 787

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781 negative results which occurred through not following their instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first 787 horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

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each household. There are however a few ceremonies when a Mun sacrifices and prophesies for the whole community; but all that I have seen or heard of are adjuncts to lamaist ceremonies.

In the Cherim ceremony which is held twice yearly, once at the beginning of the rains, and again at the beginning of winter, to keep off illness from the community, three separate rituals are performed, two by Mun, and the third by lamas. The communal nature of these sacrifices is emphasized and at least one individual from each household has to be present, and each household contributes a little of the grain. So that the Mun can participate the ceremony is held on neutral ground, when I saw it on March 28th., by the *choten* below the monastery and just outside the sacred precincts.

The first part of the ceremony consists of an offering to the devils: this ceremony is called *rum* after the name given to the chief article of sacrifice. This is a large basket filled with earth and covered with a banana leaf into which are inserted a number of varied articles with eight[11] of each sort of article: 'devil's walking-sticks' consisting of decorated bamboos with flowers inserted in holes, containers of water, milk, tea and *chi*, pieces of mica, stems of wormwood decorated with threads, fresh eggs, heaps of grain, and dried bird, dried fish and ginger. There are also offered two *ta-ming* which consist of long sticks to which are attached wrapped in leaves samples of every sort of food and drink. When the offerings have been made the Mun, sitting opposite them, intones a long chant to invoke the gods, and then takes the eggs and holds them to his forehead while he shuts his eyes and concentrates; the line which he envisages inside the eggs foretells the future health of the community. In the spring of 1937 Gongyop saw 'a fairly straight path' which signifies that there will be a mild epidemic of stomach trouble. Four years ago, when there was a bad epidemic of dysentery he saw 'a curved, almost spiral path, with a knot at the end of it.'

The second ceremony, also performed by Mun, consists of offerings to the Gods of Kinchenjunga and the Plains, and is called Tsandong. The offerings consist of rice, butter, *chimi*, a rupee and eggs. The sacrifice is in two parts; first grain and strained *chi* are thrown out by the Mun and her assistant (in March 1937 Pumri was assisted by old Kahlyeu) and later a goat is dedicated and then killed.

[11] It may be noted that for Mun and lama odd numbers are lucky, even unlucky.

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whether the infant is a boy or a girl by the fact that a boy is always 843
higher in the womb. The sex can also be diagnosed by a Mun at [787]
about eight months when the Mun *péks* the body of an expectant mother.

The sex of a child is, however, not really fixed; its sex can be changed for that of another child in the womb either with the consent of the parents or surreptitiously. This is done very simply by a pair of expectant fathers or mothers exchanging any article. Tafoor's two middle daughters should really have been boys; when his wife was carrying the eldest daughter who was then a son, a lama from some way away asked him to change; Tafoor refused, whereupon the lama surreptitiously exchanged tassels on his rosary. The result was that a daughter was born, but with a boy's character which will continue until she has slept with a man; she climbs trees, kills birds, makes bows and arrows and has a large frame more like a boy than a girl; she is indeed considerably taller than her brother Chimpet, who is two years older. The second boy-in-the-womb Tafoor exchanged voluntarily with his younger brother Chudo, who had already had one daughter and whose wife was pregnant with another daughter; the exchange was successful for both parties. This exchange, however, cannot be performed if the two pregnant mothers are blood relations. This belief, which is universally held, is, I think, another excellent illustration of the Lepcha attitude towards the correlation of sex and temperament; sex is a question entirely of the primary sexual characteristics and nothing more.

Quickening of the foetus is merely diagnosed as a sign of life; but if a child moves a great deal inside the womb the forecast is that when it is grown up he or she will be excessively lascivious.

Miscarrying is caused by a devil Sor *moong* and is an hereditary sex-linked disability (as indeed is difficult delivery). As soon as a woman has miscarried she, unless she is seriously ill, and at all events her husband, must carry the foetus down to the river accompanied by a Mun who will there *pék* the couple with a bunch of elephant grass to which coloured threads, two rings, a rupee and a turquoise have been attached. On returning home an animal must be sacrificed and the Mun will *pék* the couple again. The wife is considered 'unclean' after a miscarriage and must be well washed and fed on chicken soup and butter. Ordinarily after the sixth month of pregnancy the mother will be *pék* by a Mun to avoid miscarriage as a routine precaution. If a woman who has mis-

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

585 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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APPENDIX III

(a) Birth Horoscope

(Towards the end of my stay in Lingthem since the children whose birth we expected did not arrive I persuaded Tafoor to cast the horoscope of an imaginary child born at six o'clock in the morning of Sunday, May 16th, 1937, which is in Tibetan on the 6th day of Gubu, Ox year (*long nam*) and Fire year (*mi nam*). Nowadays Tafoor casts most of the horoscopes; the other two lamas who know how to are the two Dorjé Lapoon.) 787

BIRTH. KITSEN.

Long nam (12-year cycle). The child will insult others; will sleep continuously; will soil its bedding; will be a naughty child. Will be very talkative and curious, prying into other people's business. He will be quarrelsome and inclined to fight; will have dreams of destroying the whole world. Will only think of himself and won't do good to others, will be a bold-faced speaker. Will pretend to knowledge that he does not possess.

Mi nam (10-year cycle). If he has a very big body he will have some defect; he will be blind or deaf or will limp, or something like that. He will eat a great deal. He will live to the age of seventy-one, if he manages to pass the eight hazards (*parchet*) which lie in front of him. He will suffer from a cold and cough almost at once. Any fields or animals in his name will prosper. He will be troubled by Ginoo *moong* (jealousy). He will have one son and two daughters. He will suffer from pain in the heart.

Mariwā.[1] His number is eight *nirga gumma*. In his last incarnation he was

[1] This is a calculation for the year and also for the day based on the magic square. Each year has its own Mariwā with a different arrangement of numbers and a different centre number and colour which counts as the principle of the year; the day of the month is reckoned starting from the centre and then with the number above and then clockwise round. Each number has a constant colour. Thus for *long nam* the whole year is 9 and red and the sixth is 5 and yellow. There are nine different Mariwā which produces an independent 9-year cycle.

a puppy; his owners were *ginoo-chen* (very greedy people). When he grows up he will not lose money, he will prosper. He will be miserly and won't even give to beggars. He will be a very fecund speaker. He will get goods from others without paying for them—property and lots of clothes. Should people give him a black cloth or black thread or a black hat Chumjé *moong* (this is the

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787 same as num-een *moong*) will follow the gift and will trouble him and his children will die. He will have no desire for food. He won't build his own house; he will live with and on others and will make others work for him. He will be envious of others and will try to acquire their property and their clothes. He will try to make others work for him and will get property from others. He will rejoice in the presence of learned lamas. His birth will cause his parents *yong nyom* (general loss); therefore they must perform the ceremony of *yong-keuk*; should they fail to do so he will either die young or be like a beggar.[2] When he grows up he must give many feasts. If he learns to be a

[2] Tafoor added 'Like Sangkyar, this prediction was made for him; his parents did not do the ceremony and see him now!'

lama then in his next incarnation he will be a man so rich that he won't have to work and he will have very many relatives. He has a mole either on his head or on his waist.

Day of the week—Sunday. If he doesn't die on the seventh day or in the seventh month he will live to be seventy-one. He will honour his parents and superiors. His wife will be the daughter of a rich man.

Sahor—Stars. There are thirteen stars. Should he die at the age of twenty-eight it will be because he has to fulfil the gap in some previous reincarnation. He will dance and sing. He will have a loud voice—louder than cymbals—especially when he has drunk. He likes to possess good food and drink and dress; he does not care for other people and will be envious of their prosperity. He will not tell lies. Nobody will be able to argue with him or quarrel with him; he will be able to crush everybody verbally. He will covet all pretty women. He will have a bad eye and pains in the body and limbs.

Satarr—auspices of the day. He will be a great speaker and explainer.

Tendré—birth number. Tendré sipa. Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year he will be the head of a big village. He will be wealthy and will have no diseases. If people think bad things about him they will not dare say it to him. He will be given poison which will cause his death on Sunday at twelve o'clock midday.

Body sign. He was born at the sixth hour and therefore the sign is on his heart and he will be very rich.

Name. Karma Tsu-Ten. This is a holy name and must not be told to others.

. . . . . .

Notes: The horoscopes for all children born on the same day are identical except for the signs which depend on the hour. The apparent contradictions are reconciled by the fact that all statements are contingent: i.e. he will have good health except for the diseases mentioned; he will have no appetite but will covet other people's food and will eat out of greediness . . . etc. 'Every word is true.'

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(*b*) Marriage Horoscopes

Forecast of marriage of Tafoor. Tiger and Water year, and his wife, Horse and Fire year.

O X wife will die before husband
O O both will have good health
O
O O They will have many children
O X their property will be moderate only
X X they will have short lives
O X if his wife is ill he will be able to help her.

For another marriage, the man Dog year and Iron year, the woman Ox year and Water year.

O
O O both will live long
X
X O but their health will be indifferent
O O they will be very rich
O O exorcism will be successful for them
X but their children will die.

(*c*) Death Horoscope

(This is also an imaginary horoscope for a man aged seventy-three and therefore *kalok nam*—Rat year—dying on Sunday, 16th May.)

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Sooksa dyeu adum nyetka mak—time of death. Died from being given *chip-tsok*—unclean food. His soul is being eaten by Tseng and Gebu supernaturals. Before his death there was an evil sign such as a python in the house or a cock crowing at night, or a big tree falling tip towards the house, or a fireplace falling through on to the earth.

Lyoo deu anok kat (' The lake of his soul was dry '). Much property was expended over his illness. His death was caused by his failing to give a feast. One sister was his enemy and made him either quarrel or go to war.

Ongtong lyoo adum nyet. At the end of his life there was a quarrel between Kado Palor *rum* and Deut *moong* for his soul, whether he should be allowed to live or die. Tamseu Pongseu *moong* took his soul away and gave it to Tongryoong *moong*, who is like a tiger, to eat. At the time of his death he was thinking about his youngest son.

Loongto dyeu adum nyet. Either he had been given a red cloth or a piece of meat, or he had been given a black hat by a Mun ku-man-bu (sorcerer); this made unhappy Palor *rum* and therefore the *moong* took his soul. He was preoccupied about his male relations on the father's side; therefore these people should perform for him the ceremony of Karbo Tookdeu Klon (a white *deu* on a *pong-ring*).

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Hour of death. He died at dawn, six o'clock. Had he lived till eighty he would have lived his full life; since he died six years earlier this was caused by devils. As the man was lying ill he wanted some food like butter or meat; but Sandé *moong* ate his soul, and is still lying there watching the food. His body must be cared for—washed and anointed—by people born in Tiger or in Thunder-bird year. Sandé *moong* has gone south from the house where the man died to another house where there are four humans and a blue horse tethered in the yard.[1] These people should summon three lamas to kill this

[1] Note by Tafoor; since there are no horses in the neighbourhood this can be ignored.

Sandé *moong*. The people of the house where he died must do the big ceremony of *Shidook ryak* or in four months Sandé *moong* will return again.

Day of death—Sunday. In ten days he will be reincarnated as a tiger and after that again as a human. Three months before his death Tébrong Pano took his soul and gave it to the devils.

Time of death—Sunrise. Three months before he died Deut *moong* ate his soul. The Deut Tsen *moong* was conveyed in a gift of gold or an animal's skin. The devil is still in the neighbourhood and the object should be thrown away. In eleven days he will be born as a tiger. As he lay dying he thought about his youngest child born in Fowl year, therefore this child should make an image of Sandé *moong* and of a snake and take it to a place where two roads cross and bury it. Sandé *moong* is in a leather bag hanging on the east side of the house. For the dead man the scripture Dorjé Chudo should be read; if that is read he will be reborn as Sangé Eusung *rum*; if it is not read he will be reborn as a pig in the east. The people in the house where he died must perform the ceremonies of Deut Sha-gu and Su-nen (killing an insect with a sacramental dagger) or they will be troubled by coughs.

Month of death—Gubu. The devil which ate his soul came from the west in the skin of a tiger or some other animal. As he lay dying he was preoccupied with a big ox and a big horse,[2] and a yellow cloth. A person who possesses

[2] Note by Tafoor: this probably means a mule.

these objects should perform the Dopu ceremony and make *nahleut* (a dough image stamped with butter) on a plate.

Mariwil Parrko.[3] He died in *Sin* (the syllable in Parrko). He was thinking

[3] The Parrko is another square on which the years are counted. It is a 9-year cycle independent of all the other cycles. Each year has its controlling syllable.

of a handsome box which had valuables in it of which he was fond. He was worried either about his wife or his youngest child and regretted leaving that person. Sandé *moong* has gone south to the male relatives or the biological sisters of the deceased. Death was caused by Jamfi *moong*—a devil of high mountains. There is a piece of meat or bone close by the body which should be buried with it. The devil was brought from the west in the skin of a tiger or some other animal. He regretted leaving his youngest son and daughter. One Sandé *moong* has gone to a maternal uncle, one to his eldest sister and one is still in the skin. At the house where he died they must do Subdok Tukdo Klon (make a *deu* and take it away to the east) and Gon-tsoo To-goo (dough stamped with *leut* and *deu*) and the scripture Tongbo Gen should be read; also

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Gebu *faat* (a Mun ceremony of throwing a *thomu*—lump of dough—to see which way the end points) should be performed. 787

Corpse. The corpse should be buried; it would be bad for it to be burnt.[4]

[4] Note by Tafoor: 'If the corpse were a lama's it would be burnt just the same.'

On the corpse must be put a paper inscribed with 'Parrko sin chagyou'. The corpse must not be shown to others. Since the corpse is an old man the door of death is open; if it had been a child the door would have been closed.

Mariwé Gumurr. Sandé *moong* is living in a red milch cow. The ceremony Onchook Tsoo Deurr must be done and also Yong Kook (this is three *pong-ring* with *deu*, etc.). He died at sunrise. To the south there are many devils. To the north there is a man with big earrings, or else a mole on his ear or nose and with curly hair and a red dress, whose name is Num; the devil has gone to him.

Sahor Tachen—Stars. The devil who caused death followed a woman from the north-east. Therefore on the corpse should be a paper stamped with a horse from the *lokor* (the 12-year cycle).

Corpse carriers should be Horse or Snake year.

Removal of corpse. The corpse should be taken out of the south-east corner of the house.

. . . . . .

Notes: When Sandé *moong* is driven away ceremoniously on the third day the bag in which the devil resides should be taken with the offering and left for two days—after which it can be re-taken into use. All apparent contradictions are explained by being cumulative or by being contingent.

(*d*) Lama's Divination for Illness

May 1st. Chano came this morning to consult Tafoor about his wife, born in *beu nam* Snake year (1905), who was ill, and also his youngest daughter, who was born in *kik nam* Fowl year (1931) and was suffering from stomach ache. Taking their dates of birth and the present date as his data, Tafoor worked out the following diagnosis of the causes of their illnesses and the measures to be taken to cure them. The explanations were added afterwards 787 755

Wife. The drawing of the first diagram showed that the illness was caused by Sabdok Loo *moong*, by Dadé *moong* (other names Nanjet *moong* and Tom-joong Deut *moong*: it is an evil spirit sent by an enemy), and from Tamsi *moong*.[1]

[1] Tamsi *moong* is the *moong* who causes quarrelling and wars. To keep away quarrels and kill this *moong* a piece of paper is stamped with the printed effigy of the *moong* and surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks. Lamas then sit around this paper holding in their joined hands a *phoorbu*—a sort of sacred dagger, which has three heads on the handle and a piece of black cloth tied round the middle. They summon the devil in a sing-song voice with partly closed eyes: the devil comes in the form of an insect on to the paper when it is killed with the *phoorbu*. When the insect is killed it and the paper are put into a rat's skull,

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round which twelve *sutsong*—pieces of wood pointed at both ends and with a notch in the middle—one end being red and the other black—are tied, and the whole is buried where two roads meet, being well rammed down and a stone set on top of it.

Then from the first diagram, consulting the sacred book he learned the following additional facts. The patient will dream of a red ox.[3]

[3] This dream is automatic; if the patient says she has had no such dream it will be because she doesn't remember it; it is in the book.

People in her house mustn't buy blue cloth, or goats or oxen, and must not sit near a big tree. She must not eat the flesh of a red ox or of carrion. If she will survive to the month of Chupu, i.e. November—she will recover. She is troubled by the Hlamen Djémé *rum*, and he has already taken her soul inside his[3] walls. It is necessary to perform the ceremony of Deut Shagu Kyok.[4]

[3] This is a supernatural equivalent to the Mun *rum*, half-way between gods and demons, of an ambivalent nature, a god when pleased a devil when angry. Between here and heaven it has a gaol where it keeps the souls of men captive until bribed by offerings to let them go.

[4] For this ceremony a small image of the invalid made out of buckwheat powder is required. On the board are also *yé*, leaf cups with grain in, arrows and spindles; gold and silver is scraped over it. *Chimi* are lit, books read, the patient *pék* with *chongbu zipkē* and the offering removed far away.

The illness has been caused through considerable enmity and jealousy.[5]

[5] Karo *moong* is released automatically through evil thoughts, if you are annoyed with a person because his animals have strayed into your field or because you think he has done you harm, or even because you envy his possessions. The pestering by Karo *moong* is not the result of malice, and though through divination you try to find out who has released it no sort of revenge is taken. To cure its symptoms lamas will burn incense and a Mun will offer an ox and *pék* the patient. If, after having thought evilly of a person you repent and wish to withdraw Karo *moong* you light a number of *chimi* and perform the ceremony of Kongso Klon; chanting and beating drums either in the dark or at your house (must be done by a lama). Karo *moong* doesn't kill.

If the patient herself doesn't die somebody else is liable to. The smell of high meat is insufferable to her. She is very restless. Chimbu Klon and Dumbu Soong must be done at once.[6]

[6] Chimbu Klon—to give a feast without getting any contributions from the guests. The feast must include meat.

Gyapchi klon (this is the same as Dumbu Soong). Five images are made (*a*) Sher *moong*, white, (*b*) Lho *moong*, yellow, (*c*) Deut *moong*, red, (*d*) Chyong *moong*, indigo, (*e*) Mamoo Takloong, black, represented as a woman sitting with spread legs and open vulva. Round these are arranged in circles 100 *chupé* for (*a*) 100 heaps of rice for (*b*), 100 *chimi* for (*c*), 100 *nakhar*—i.e. pieces of dough stamped with the figures of a man and a woman—for (*d*), and 100 *chongbu zipkē* for (*e*). There must also be 100 *zumsob*—earth copies of *chom*. The lama officiating at this ceremony must be given five rupees.

If the invalid had not become ill she would have been very prosperous,

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CHANO CONSULTS TAFOOR ABOUT HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS

Above: Tafoor casts a horoscope in the monastery porch.

Below: The devils to be exorcised. Deut *moong*, Mamoo *moong*, Lho *moong*. They are about 25 cms. high, made out of coloured buckwheat powder on stands of banana stem.

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with lots of food and clothes and animals. As it is she is very bad; her soul has already one leg outside the body. It is the evil thoughts of others who have caused her malady. The Deut Shagu Kyok ceremony must be done at once.

Her husband Chano was born in Oon *nam* (Sheep year), and their years are antagonistic. They are liable to be troubled by Chemen *moong*, Loo Desen *moong*, Muzong Rum Loo, Sabdong *moong*.

The patient will dream of an old and decrepit house, and of a stream. She will vomit. She must not wear a black hat or put on black paint or buy anything black. For a year she should not take food from a relation except those living in the house.[7]

[7] The *moong* possessing her will be hungry and will try to get food. So that when it sees people giving the patient food it will attach itself to them in the hopes of getting more. This holds good for a year. It does not apply to people living in the same house.

A lama must read the following books: Tinchu Bekeu, Numjeu Cheré, Pungoor Luboong, Chétop Chachu. He must also make the following *deu*—Chemen Gédo, Lumoo Gédo—and set them up on a path. Chano must also get the ceremony Loo-fat performed by a Nandjému, and the ceremonies Goonchen and Séné Kyop by lamas. The wife must change her name.[8]

[8] This refers to the name she is usually known by, not her book-name. The new name can be given by anyone, and after that the old name must not be used. If the old name was meaningful, there is no tabu on the name in other contexts. The old name can be resumed after a year.

The rat skull (see 1) must be carried far by her nephew and buried deeply. A *Mazeu tsop* (image of the invalid) (4) must be made. There will be many quarrels in the house if the fine-seeming mischief-making advice and scandal of others is listened to and then Gébu Tabrong Pano[9] will be angry, and will

[9] Quarrels affect this deity as if they were a burning chilli (i.e. irritating smoke).

send all sorts of aches and pains, starting with toothache, as a punishment, and they will continue for some time. The Tyouma Rumso[10] ceremony

[10] This consists of dancing round a cloth and knife-scabbard with a knife in the hand, and also burning *lapsong*—that is incense with crops, *chi* and butter, and scraping gold, silver, brass, copper, iron, turquoise, coral, and conch-shell over the incense. It is the same as Da-floh.

must be performed and also Kongso Klon (chasing devils).

Baby. The baby will be seriously ill. A small image must be made of it and the invalid's hat and coat put with it and it must be taken far away. When taken out of the house the head must not face towards the sunset as trouble will come from there. It should be taken out facing Chyom (south). It is necessary for the ceremonies to be done very carefully as the mother's soul has already got one foot outside the body.

For the baby's health the father should not go anywhere where there has been quarrelling or where corpses have been burned, or where there are people of low degree like blacksmiths and musicians. The baby is troubled by

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787 Maknyam *moong*[11] and will get pains as though the body were pierced, and pains

[11] This is the devil which causes death. It acts rather like a vampire; those
755 people whom it kills become in turn Maknyam *moong*. Consequently it is in
a way the evil ghost of one's ancestors—since they died by Maknyam *moong*
[761] and became it in their turn. At one time it used to be visible; but the *sanyoul koong* (tree) which grew in the mountains was cut down and barred its way; now the devil's body can no longer come out, merely its soul.

Maknyam *moong* runs in every family, but some families also suffer from Arot maknyam *moong*—the devil which causes violent deaths. Such a family is that of Kaji's (late) first wife. One of her brothers recently fell from a tree; a pregnant woman in the family was crushed by a falling tree.

in the heart and left shoulder, and shortness of breath. The parents should not buy red or white cloth, or bows and arrows, or any sort of animal from other people, or eat the flesh of carrion or drink rock or rain water. Should it survive till the fifth day of Choobu the crisis will be then. Care should be taken not to let it play with knives and other dangerous instruments. The following sacred books should be read: Numchya Chu, Tukzung Chosung, Nangsa Nanget, Dorjé Chu, etc. The Dafloh dance should be performed, incense burned, and holy *tyü* water sprinkled. The Tsatsoh Kyop (stamped *chosen*) ceremony should be performed, and also Tsinmu Faat. The child should wear a yellow cloth. Some iron, the head of a chicken and the head of a monkey (? skulls) should be made into a bundle and put on the *kingkoor* (house altar).

For some time there will be many quarrels and general bad temper. (*Aside*: perhaps the baby has been shaken up inside.) All its life long the child will be in danger of death, and that is equally true of its mother. (I think this means that both are threatened by hostile supernaturals, and constant care is needed to ward them off.) Hlamen Djémé (this is the ambivalent supernatural, the god of the Mun, god or demon according as to whether it is pleased or angry) will plague the patient much. The Deut *moong* which is in the house plagues it as severely as if it were the child's mother. The Deut Shagu Kyop (4) ceremony must be performed at once.

The gods and devils are quarrelling over the child's body; should the devils win the child will die. Therefore the ceremonies must be done very properly. The child must avoid water out of rocks or from puddles. Had it not been ill everything it set hand to—trade, crops, animals—would prosper; it would have a life covered with flowers. But (figuratively speaking) a prayer-flag is tottering and must be set upright. Some covetousness (perhaps from a childless woman) has caused the trouble. The child is always in a hurry, inattentive to its parents. Its soul has been taken by Gongbu[12] and Mamoo Deut Tsen[13]

[12] This devil causes swelled stomach. To cure get an ox's horn and fill with rice seed; the lama will hold this and pray silently, and then *pék* the patient and give him some seeds. Butter, meat and *taki* must be mixed and set fire to, and taken outside.

[13] This is a trinity of supernaturals, consisting of the female Mamoo who is indigo, Deut *moong* who is white and Tsen *moong* who is red.

will give trouble. Maknyam *moong* (11) is in the house, and also a devil Badé which was sent in the time of the father or grandfather. Now the gods are angry and Daphlo should be performed. The child is constantly dreaming of human

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corpses; it either has, or will, excreted and brought up blood. It has no appetite. First the gods were angry, now the *moong* are. The ceremony Yongkeuk Gedo Klon [34] must be performed and Sunen (same as Tamsi, 1) and the taking 787 755

[34] This is a ceremony for the material prosperity of the worshipper. A milking pot surrounded with a rope is set up, and on the left side is put a cup of strained *chi*, with four *salyus*, dabs of butter. Lamas read their books and there is a constantly recurring phrase 'Yago Chakook Sho'; whenever that recurs the bystanders shout 'Ya'.

away of the image of the child *ing kup leut ryak* (4). Also a red *yeu* Tsendeu Gedo must be made. When the image is taken away the head must not face towards the hills; trouble comes from there. The child's chief trouble will be cough.

N.B. When the Dafloh is danced in laymen's houses a Mun will kill an ox at the same time.

. . . . . .

Although Chano is a lama he can perform none of these ceremonies for himself, and must pay for consultations, etc., as much as a layman would. Tafoor says he has to give his heart to the work—because all the supernaturals are hidden in a huge house—but he finds everything from the books. If he relied on inspiration he might make mistakes. It is very similar to systematic astrology or card-reading, the varying permutations of years and signs being practically inexhaustible.

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(*e*) Performance of Indicated Ceremonies

On May 9th the ceremonies indicated by Tafoor's exorcism were performed. The various lamaist ceremonials were telescoped into one—*Gyapchi klon*—by the addition of such other items as were indicated for the expulsion of the other devils, without introducing contradictory elements. Thus, using the notes in the previous horoscope (1) was not performed as Tamsi *moong* was not the chief operative devil; (4) was super-imposed on (6) *gyapchi klon*; (10) the Tyou-ma rum-so or Dafloh dance was performed at the end of the ceremony; and Yong keuk gédo klon, a minor ceremony, was postponed. The most important thing was that Hlamen Djémé *rum* had been recognised by Gongyop as being in fact the Mun spirit; and therefore Mrs. Chano was to be dedicated to the Mun god and to receive instruction from Gongyop as her teacher. Consequently there were as usual a simultaneous Mun and lamaist ceremony; the Mun ceremony conducted by Gongyop is called ABOONG AK (opening the mouth) or RUM KEUK (acknowledging the god); the lamaist ceremony conducted by Tafoor can be conveniently referred to as GYAPCHI KLON. 755

Preparatory to *gyapchi klon* Chano had prepared a large quantity of ground millet powder and ground buckwheat powder, and the trunk of a banana tree was cut up into segments to serve as stands for the images to be made. Sifted earth was also collected, as well as a hundred leaves; in the morning rice was cooked.

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000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[487] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285] ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415 bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

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The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyes and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

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782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

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782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as
[622] before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

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individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
● 787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[431] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

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173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

●787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

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159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
• [787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

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but later on a Mun appeared to him in a dream and told him what to do. Nowadays he always dreams before a ceremony, and thus learns what action he has to take. During the course of these dreams he speaks with Kings of Sikkim, Europeans, and all sorts of other people. Actually it is a demon who is speaking to him, but it has chosen to adopt this form.

Before becoming a Mun Gongyop was ill for nearly three years, and during all this time lay almost like dead, the symptoms being the same as with his previous illness. He was visited by both Mun and Lamas; and both divined that he was being troubled by the Mun's own private god; and that the only way he could recover was to make this god his own. Part of the ceremony was done by a Lama; but the most important part, known as *Rum-Keuk*, was done by a female Mun. An ox was slaughtered and part of its flesh, together with grain and butter, was offered to the gods by the Mun. She was offered five rupees in payment for her services; but refused to accept any money until Gongyop had completed his studies: she took only the head and two legs of the ox, together with its vital organs. These had formed the actual ceremonial offering. Gongyop did not understand the words she used during the ceremony as she spoke in a special esoteric language; but in any case he was so ill at the time that he could not even drag himself outside the house for the purposes of nature: he was unable to see properly; nor could he hear. He remained by her side during the ceremony and from time to time she waved things over him. Before the actual physical signs of his illness developed he became as one mad. He would wander aimlessly about without knowing where he was going: sometimes he went to other people's houses, and sometimes he would roam in the forest. He never knew what he was doing; nor did he afterwards remember where he had been. Sometimes he had the feeling that he could walk very fast, as though he was being transported on air. He believes that in this way he

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three days to tell. Gongyop was very anxious that we should 756
write it down; but the flesh was not sufficiently strong! At the end of his third year an ox was sacrificed, and his teacher pronounced him as fit, although he has still a number of things to learn. He cannot, for instance, do the *Sanglion*, a special rite performed at death. He thinks it a curse to be a Mun, and hopes his son will never have to be one. In his opinion a Lama is more powerful than a Mun; but the latter is probably more efficient when it is a question of merely driving demons away.

I asked Gongyop if the Padim god was angry when he 756
became a Mun. "No," he said, "the two gods are husband 776
and wife, and the Padim god was glad because the Mun had come to share houses (i.e. Gongyop's body) with him. The Padim god does not call his wife, but is naturally glad when she arrives." The spirits are not always present in his body. When they come he feels a heavy burden, as though he is carrying an immense weight. These particular gods normally live in a place on the other side of Kinchinjunga, which mountain they have to cross to reach him. At the time of their arrival he feels a weight pressing him down. When they are in possession of his body he is able to prophesy. At such 756
times he does not know what he is saying, nor has he after- 787
wards any recollection. He cannot call the spirits up at will 776
and only prophesies twice a year: once in summer and again in winter. He generally feels ill the evening before, and only becomes normal again from cock-crow on the morning following the "possession." He feels heavy and depressed; also he cannot stand noise. He trembles all the time and sweats profusely. During this time he must pray to the gods to find out what must be done. He has no particular feelings at the time of possession; but at the moment when the spirits actually enter his body everything goes black in front of him, after which he remembers no more. He sits cross-legged on the floor making offerings; by his side is a necklace of flowers and a decorated stick known as *Sagyi-patung*. Suddenly he feels as though he is being poked all over with

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756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

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concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776]
the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751]
does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164]
arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

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756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
●787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

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755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however,
● [787] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,
					1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

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796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop ●[787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 386] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw any- 796
thing approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was 781
not marked.

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the 796
spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and [533 781] implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell.

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the [787] ● ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain.

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number 796
than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was 571
told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be

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was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner, when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that although he had studied the book for years he still found some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 584
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo,* that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo,* sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has [777] struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's [788] ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had [534] instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of [373] small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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764 On top of each grave a small hillock was made, with a tombstone (*cók bum*) in the middle; the grave thus marked was called *cók de*. The inside of the pit was carefully laid out with stones, so that the earth would not touch the corpse. The reason, why the dead were always turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga was that they "should see the mountain, from which the Lepchas originated."

According to the custom of various localities, people were either buried in single graves, which were made in the fields, the jungle or—more frequently—close to a river, or on cemeteries, called *cók bróng lyang* or *cók bram lyang*. While the single graves were mostly destroyed in the course of time, the site of the ancient cemeteries is still [766] often remembered.—Children below the age of ten were buried without the full ceremonial. Women, who died together with their child in childbirth, were buried jointly in one tomb.

When the funeral procession reached the freshly dug grave, the corpse was lowered into the pit and then, according to local custom, various things were laid near the dead. Besides the half seer of rice and the coin for *Fă gróng thing*, a bow and arrow were placed at the side of a man, or sometimes his knife (*ban*), the indispensable instrument of every Lepcha man. To a girl, her comb, and to a woman her sickle were given. Then a rope made of bamboo tissue and consisting of two parts, linked together with a loose sling, was lowered by a *Bong thing, Mŭn*, or a close relative into the grave, Shortly before the pit was closed, the person who held the rope called the deceased by his name, telling him that his "life spirit" is now being removed and that he should keep away from the living and not try to harm them; then he pulled hard on the rope, so that the sling opened and the lower half of the rope fell into the pit.

In order to close the grave, at first some stones were arranged in a kind of roof also above the basket, so that the corpse was surrounded now from all sides by a stone wall. Then earth was pilled up, to form a small hillock and above the head of the dead, the tombstone was set. When heaping up this hillock, great care was taken to make its surface as smooth as possible, because three days after the funeral the relatives had to return to the grave, to see whether there were any traces on the [787] hillock. If imprints of human feet were seen, it was regarded as a sign that the spirit of the dead had walked around the grave, but if traces of any animal were found, it was believed that they were left by the demon, who had caused the man's illness and death.—Then a grass whisk was taken and a magic circle was drawn with it around the tomb, to prevent any other soul from entering it. In some localities, if a man was buried, a "wild boars nest" —a small shelter in form of a nest, as made

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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764 loose sling to the little finger of the *Mŭn's* left hand. In her right hand she took a knife, as weapon against evil spirits.

764 After these preparations had been finished, the *Mŭn* works herself gradually into a slight trance, and with a high, loud voice she begins 775 her incantations. She calls upon the *Mŭk nyam* to recognize, that he belongs from now on to the world of the dead, and that he should not hide in trees, stones, rivers, lakes or fire, but he should join the soul of the *Mŭn* for a tour of the Lepcha land. The *Mŭn* sings now for hours a long, rhymed account, the text of which she had learned by heart from her teacher during the time of initiation. She describes to the spirit the beauty of Sikkim, its snow mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes, the forests, fields and lonely dwellings of men. At last, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit down the Teesta River and describing the source of this greatest river of Sikkim, she conducts the *Mŭk nyam* across the Indian plains, "to show it the ocean". But she admonishes the deceased, that he should not gaze too long at the endless sea, as he has to return with her that very night to the Lepcha land. Then again the *Mŭk nyam* is led to the Teesta and following the river upstream, the *Mŭn* guides the spirit back to the house, from which they started the journey.[15]

764 In the early morning, when the darkness of the night begins to fade into the grey of the approaching day, the ceremony reaches its 775 climax. At this time all the relatives of the deceased, who are present ●787 in the house, assemble in front of the *Mŭn*. The dresses, jewellery and other personal belongings of the dead person, as well as numerous dishes with various foods are placed near the *Mŭn*, who finishes now her incantations and falls into a full trance. Her eyes close, the face becomes ash-gray and mask-like. Suddenly, tears begin to flow from her eyes and the whole body begins to tremble. This is supposed to be the moment at which the spirit of the deceased enters the body of the *Mŭn*, and using the sorceress as a medium, the *Mŭk nyam* begins to speak through her mouth. He tells now to his relatives the cause of his death and expresses his last wishes, while members of the family in their turn frequently ask the deceased, whether he left perhaps any business unsettled in his lifetime, where some of his possessions, which could not be found are hidden, etc. Many of the older Lepchas who witnessed several times the recalling of the *Mŭk nyam*, unanimously state that frequently most surprising occurrences take place during this ceremony. It often happens that somebody dies without having disclosed, where he had hidden his money or jewels, and the relatives were searching in vain for these things. If however this question is put to the *Mŭn* in his trance, she usually answers it without hesitation

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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764
and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

(5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

(6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child, a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu, should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from [787]
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depicted alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches 778
in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831]
legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exo[illegible]st; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164- goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres ●787] are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776 sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits 772] of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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776 mountain regions he is called Mo-nom-dju, for it is he who leads
224 the chamois and the wild sheep, Mo-nom, to the hunters. In the lower hills he is called Se-go-bu-log-dju and delivers up stag, bears and other game. In the lower plains he is called Se-wing-dju, or the one who helps capture the game of the plains. Gom-shi and Gom-yu-rum are hunting gods and it is they who instil in the hunters the passion for hunting. The god of the hunters is worshipped exclusively by the men and the women do not in any way participate in the worship. We shall consider the details of this sacrifice at a later stage.
[773 The Rong claim that "Rum-zong-pa-no gave them bows,
226] arrows and knives and taught them how to shoot fish."

The wife of Rum-zong-pa-no is Na-li-pun-di who ins-
776 tructed the women in the arts of farming, weaving and taught
[773] them housework and the use of the sickle. Sa-dju is another god venerated as god of agriculture. If a housewife who
[781] is possessed by Sa-dju dies, the spirit continues to possess one of her daughters even though the daughter may have in the meanwhile left the family through marriage. This deity appears to the women in dreams in the guise of an old man.
[787] If the apparition has a large goitre it augurs well for a rich harvest. If on the other hand it has no goitre at all it omens a bad harvest.

782 We already know from myths related earlier, that the
776 Lepchas were given the first seeds by higher beings. These seeds were gaguni, which has the appearance of a millet-like maize; sama, a kind of white millet; goya, dry rice, and mokai, red maize. The dog plays an important role in the obtaining of rice and hence the Rong give, each time, some
[231] portion of the rice they eat to the dog. We have noticed how, after a meal of rice, the remnants are scattered on the floor, and the dogs, which otherwise are not allowed inside the house, came in and ate the rice. The sacrifice to the god of agriculture is usually offered by the housewife. Nevertheless the man can offer the sacrifice if for some grave reason the woman is unable to do so. Man is not altogether excluded from the performance of the sacrifice, as is the case with the women in the sacrifice to the god of the hunters.

776 The family or household god is Rum-fat, who is the protector of domestic animals. The two gods of procreation,

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773
he had done this, he went up to Tiamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 773
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[56]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 773
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār Basti gives us an 773
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 773
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

56. op. cit. p. 249 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787] a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775 her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778] millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782 harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hö."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it
787] are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the
front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is
a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged,
the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of
the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf
on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the appren-
tice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master
makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he
explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid
to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate
your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body
as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel
filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it
three times from three different places. This drinking of the
chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual
ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three
years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction,
a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the
pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant
symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-
thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only,
can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice.
Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit
is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as
its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
793 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
834 activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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793
nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [734]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

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793
796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(*h*) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miă song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [00]

00. sa hor rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyăr pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dzăn dong dăm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzăn dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu dăm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzăn dong hiu dăm dong hiu o! ŏn sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miă song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 images which he bought from Bhutan to replace the small existing ones. The monasteries are the only occasions in Lepcha life for conspicuous display and ornament and there is a constant feeling of emulation and friendly rivalry between the different villages as to who shall have the largest, most beautiful and best equipped monastery. Until recently that of Lingthem was easily the finest in every way, but in 1937 the people of Gyatong decided to build an [476] even bigger one (in the building of which the people of Lingthem will aid). Although the people of Lingthem hope in time that they will be able to rebuild their monastery so as to be even bigger than the new one at Gyatong they cannot consider doing so yet; but to counterbalance the effort of their neighbours the people of Lingthem are collecting money to replace the present thatched roof with one of corrugated iron. From the aesthetic point of view the change will be an unmitigated disaster, but the present thatch, though pleasant to look at, is inadequate to keep out the almost continuous rain, as the condition of the painted woodwork and hanging pictures on silk (*tang-ku*) shows.

The monastery is made of stone, wood and plaster; the walls [384] are coloured white with a broad band of red (the dye is a clay brought from a considerable distance) and picked out with blue; the windows, doors and porch are made out of wood and are quite pleasantly carved in stylised geometrical patterns. The main place of worship is on the ground floor with the entrance in the middle of the north wall, consisting of a pair of wooden doors. These 346 doors are protected by a built-out porch, on the top of which is a balcony which runs the whole length of the first storey; this porch 778 is enclosed except for a fairly narrow entrance in the centre and on three sides there are inserted prayer wheels[5] about four feet from the ground. These prayer wheels are filled with written prayers or *mantra* inside a wooden drum which is set on spikes so as to revolve freely; the outside of the drum is covered with paper inscribed with a prayer in Len-za script. When the pious approach the *monastery they circumambulate it three times, always keeping the*

[188] [5] One of the tenets of lamaism is that a prayer repeated mechanically is as valid as one said orally. The two chief mechanisms for mechanical praying are (1) prayer drums filled with written prayers or *mantra*: turning the wheel is equivalent to uttering all the contained prayers, and (2) prayer flags. These are strips of linen stamped with printed prayers; each time the flag flutters in the breeze it is as though the setter-up had said all the prayers printed on it. These devices are described more fully in Chapter Seven, pp. 190–191.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

133 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
[491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

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lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, 137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

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793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
[292] similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

[788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
293] twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
● [788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[33] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[768 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[78] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

1 [i.e. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tafoor.--Analyst]

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585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 415 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
[781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

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796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but [788] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of [535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

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After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788] ●
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

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796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all [576] the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As [788] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani- [788] ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

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636 the workings of Lepcha democracy. The original appointee of the Maharani was a Tibetan (or Sikkimese; the Lepchas do not distinguish the two races) who lived at Hi; but the Lepchas did not like having a stranger set over them and asked for the office to be given to Lepchas; the Court, which is always sensitive to such petitions, acquiesced, and the office was split into two: the seven villages on the Teesta side were put in charge of a man of Hi, and the five on the Talung side in charge of Tafoor's father. The man at Hi fulfilled the office satisfactorily, and his son is now the Muktair of the whole of Zongu; he is a youngish man and has so far no male children; he gives general satisfaction in his performance of the office.

When Tafoor's father died in 1935 Tafoor should normally have succeeded him. There were however some objections to his taking the office; he could not read or write Nepali or Sikkimese, in which all official business is transacted, but only ecclesiastical Tibetan. Even more important was the fact that he was the only relatively young lama who was sufficiently learned to be able to direct the monastery when the present old Dorjé Lapoon died; and he was ● 789 the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who had the requisite knowledge and who had gone through the mystic training necessary 636 for the stopping of rain and hail. This power is firmly believed in by the lamaists of Tibet and Sikkim, and in the extremely rainy Talung valley is a most useful and necessary accomplishment. If Tafoor had become Muktair he would not have had the necessary time for these religious pursuits, and therefore, somewhat against Tafoor's private desires, the householders requested that he might be allowed to continue his ecclesiastical work.

636 While the matter was still undecided the Rhennock Kazi and the Political Officer came to stop at the *dàk*-bungalow at Singhik. An individual called Tempa from Lingthem went and offered his services to them, and with his fluent Nepali and Tibetan made himself very useful. At the end of their visit he asked the Rhennock Kazi to appoint him Muktair of the five Talung villages, and the request was granted.

Tempa is a man of forty-four who was born in Savong near Gangtok, well outside Zongu. He claims to be a pure Lepcha, but both his character and appearance are different to the Lepchas of Zongu. He was the only man in Lingthem to have any facial hair; he had a straggling fringe of coarse black beard round his face. When he was about fifteen he became a coolie of the present

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781 negative results which occurred through not following their
787 instructions. Not even Tafoor had any knowledge of his first horoscope, though he could have re-cast it if he had been curious.

vi

785 The higher lamas, the *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon, perform mystic exercises for the good of their soul and to acquire supernatural powers. These exercises consist firstly in acquiring the requisite instruction and then being immured in a specially prepared and completely dark room called *tyang-gong* for a certain period. While they are immured they naturally see no light at all; for periods up to a fortnight they fast completely; for longer periods food is handed through a series of doors so arranged that no light and no possible contact with the external world reaches the mystic. During the whole period the lamas naturally cannot wash; a hole is especially prepared in the floor through which they can excrete.

As has already been explained this discipline is used for short periods for the ceremony of *kong-so klon*; it is also used for some other similar rituals. It was employed by Tafoor in order to obtain his supernatural power of stopping (or rather moving on) rain. Tafoor received his preliminary instruction from his 'big father', the second Dorjé Lapoon, who had been taught by a third lama who had learned the art in Tibet. When his instruction was complete a *tyang-gong* was constructed inside his house (there is a permanent one on the upper floor of the monastery) and Tafoor was immured. For ten days he did without food, drink or sleep, concentrating his mind on the special words and 'thoughts' that he had been taught, and counting his rosary. During the whole time the other people in the house had to take every precaution against his hearing human sounds or voices. At the end of the tenth day the second Dorjé Lapoon read the proper holy books, offered *cherkem* to the devils, opened the *tyang-gong* gradually, and fed Tafoor on boiled and powdered rice and milk. For two days Tafoor could not eat solid food; he was very weak and thin when he came out of the retreat.

789 Tafoor is now the only lama in the whole neighbourhood who practises the sending-away of rain; his uncle naturally knows how, but nowadays he concentrates exclusively on stopping hail. While Tafoor is keeping away the rain he must stop indoors concentrating; nobody must speak to him while he is doing this, nor may any

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member of the household go near a big stream nor pour water on the ashes in the house. Tafoor also must refrain from sexual activity, for at the time of the orgasm the gods would look down and be angry.[11] Control of rain can be as localised as is wished; it can extend over a single field or the whole of Zongu, and can be held off as long as the officiant prays. I suggested to Tafoor that he could ruin an enemy by concentrating all the time and preventing any rain falling on the enemy's fields; he agreed that this was so, but the idea seemed to him so ridiculous that he burst out laughing, although he treats this power of his otherwise very seriously and does not jest about it. The control of hail does not require the same precautions but necessitates the presence of some magical objects including a ram's horn.

789 [834]

There is no question but that not only Tafoor but all the people of the neighbourhood believe completely in this power of stopping rain; people from some way away will come with big presents to get Tafoor to stop rain when they want to work their fields and will work for him also as recompense. I unfortunately only found out about this claim to power of Tafoor's in the last month of my stay in Lingthem. Lingthem is very rainy and there were very few days in which no rain fell. In the last month of my stay there were six occasions when Tafoor announced beforehand that he was stopping rain and on those days no rain did in fact fall. The most extraordinary were the three days of the Boom koor ceremony whose date was fixed after some argument about a fortnight before it took place; when the date was finally decided upon Tafoor said immediately that no rain would fall during those three days, and in point of fact those were the only three days during my whole stay in Lingthem during which no rain fell. There were two other fine days during this period without rain for which I asked Tafoor if he was responsible; he said that on those days he had done nothing. In the event of rain falling while he was meant to be stopping it he has the alibi that some more powerful lama has been sending the rain away from his village to Lingthem or the neighbourhood, for the power consists only in shifting the rain and not in destroying it.

It would naturally need far longer observation than I was able to make to pronounce any judgement on this claimed power. It is worth noting that there is no sort of compulsion for the Lepchas to hire Tafoor; many people do not, because they say they cannot afford to, but everybody I questioned was certain that this

[11] Semen is called *tik-oong*—penis water.

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789 rain-control worked, and cited numerous examples from their past experience to prove it.

This is the only instance of powers which the Lepchas themselves deem supernatural being used in ordinary life. The tradition of sorcery has already been referred to; its use is so rare that it plays
832 no part in the life of most people. There is a tradition of love magic in which the hairs of the two people meant to love one another are plaited and concentrated upon. Although they know the ritual, lamas themselves say that nobody living has performed it. It is said that Mun are requested to do this by one spouse if the other is unfriendly or by parents if their child and his or her spouse disagree: I never heard of an actual instance of this and it would seem as though it were only a tradition.

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000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
●789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[387] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[137] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

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782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

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782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as
before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear a child reproved for making too much noise while the actual chanting was in progress.

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491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the following morning. The motor road at present ends at Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following evening by any moderately active walker. The actual distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
181 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire; but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen, and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

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636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with whom they may discuss their problems in person. The system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to [789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only met him once, when he came to ~~pay~~ his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son, as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a man has no children some near paternal relative will usually be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors 622 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees, 692 but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir- [685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with misappropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in 622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from the state, but each household is required to give him three days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

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159 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the
595 light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life;
581 but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often
[789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

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159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly
[428] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at
533 intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight
789 the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the
778 day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

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535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

● 789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
[813] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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* * * * *

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7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison [411]
and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. 291
A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often
extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small
hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, [184
between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and 285]
heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while
in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of
bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and
a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of 293
a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle,
which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs
behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad [184]
leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on,
running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures;
they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All 301
the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops
in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and [439]
turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from
the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or
amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of 415
Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they 789
contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the
bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great
beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and 301
in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently 515
dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often
see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port,
demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail,
teaze the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid
it up for him, and retire. The women always wear 302
two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are
most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking
partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [754]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun 778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

793
In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[87] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

87. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 294 a.b.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
● 789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[774] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[778] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[781] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[777] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[764] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

791 Lepcha AK5

[Information concerning the Mun, who is a combination shaman, magician and diviner, has been placed in category 756.]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tak bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

000 9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wöjkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

791 793 756

Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

791 177

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya ba* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination bells, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

791 177 771

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

13. About Lepcha funeral ceremonies, especially those performed according to Buddhist rites see Gorer, Himalayan village, pp. 345—362. 600

14. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a number of different Lepcha clans. Among these the clans called Sengdungmo, Lingsom-mo, Heemo, Karthakmo and the descendants of the Thekong Salung family were of principal importance; other clans are Tugnyeemo (living near Chumthang), Sampa-putso-mo (Namtehn and Tsidam), Targokmo (Rin chenpong), Barmekmo (Barmiok), Namteemo (Namtai), Mangmungmo (Dentam), Taglongmo (Dallam), Samtrukmo (Samdong), Namphagmo (Namphok) Ratoomo (Rinchenpong), Kabeemo (Tumlong), Phogram-mo and Rungnyogram-mo (Lingthem), Rinyet-rambo (near the source of the Rangeet river), Rathongram-mo (near the source of the Radong river), Ringbit rambho (near the source of the Radong river), Lasogmo (Tashiding and Lasog), Kaleg ram-mo (source of the Kaleg river), Rinagmo (Mangbro), Yogcham-mo (Phensang), Rimpongmo (Rumtek), Nebemo (Dikchu), etc. 618

The Lepcha communities, residing in Ilam (Nepal) were called Rangangmo, Phengbo, Namchamo, Gholingmo, Samdurmo, Kotramo, Sungfungmo, Samlingmo, Lingdam-mo, etc.—The Ilam group of the Lepcha people seems to be of fairly recent origin. According to the historical material available, some 800 Lepcha households, who had taken part in an insurrection against the reigning 7th Maharaja, left Sikkim in 1826 under the leadership of their headmen Dathno, Jerong Denon and the Kazi Gorok, and settled with the assistance of the Nepalese in the province of Ilam.

Two other names should be mentioned here: the *Na ong*, who lived near Dallam in Sikkim, but later died out, and a group of Limbus called Sanyit bho, who were classified as a Lepcha clan. A note on the *Na ong* see also in Kali Kumar Das, The Lepcha People, p. 5.

15. The Ilam Lepchas have a particular custom of keeping those assembled in the house awake during the long vigil.[1] While the *Mun* chants her account, one man—usually somebody who is known as a witty story teller—takes his place in another corner of the house and tries to keep all present awake by telling them jokes and stories. 764 764

16. *The kung tek* and *Ne kung ngal* are said to have been the children of the Lepcha ancestors, *Fa grong thing* and *Na zong nyo*. This first pair of sorcerers is today surrounded by numerous legends, current among the Lepchas. One of these legends tells about their encounter with *Gyad kbum bazgs*, the ancestor of the Sikkim Maharajas, who came to obtain their blessing so that sons might be born to him. About the way in which he and his retinue were received by *The kung tek* and his wife, the Chronicles say: "Entering his house they discovered the old man on a raised throne of bamboo. He had washed off the dust and ashes, which had covered his face during his work of clearing the jungle. He had put on his feather cap and the garland of teeth and claws of wild animals, interspersed with various shells and cowries. He sat with a dignified mien, while his wife *Ne kung ngal* was busily engaged in getting food and drink ready. When the strangers entered, a wide bamboo mat was spread on the ground...." *Gyad kbum bazgs* received the blessings and returned to his residence in the Chumbi Valley, where in the following years three sons were born to him. Later he went back to Sikkim to offer his thanks to *Thekung tek* and to conclude a pact of friendship with him: "This friendship was cemented by a ceremony, at which several animals, both domestic and wild, were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Tibetans in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the raw hides of animals, entwined the entrails around their bodies, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood oath to each other."—This event is also shortly mentioned in Risley, H. H., History of Sikkim, JBTS, Vol. IV., Calcutta 1896. 791

It is possible, that *The kung tek* was a person which once actually lived and which only later became enveloped in legends, as the Chronicles mention—besides a number of descendants, of whom only the names are given—also a certain Lepcha headman, called Tsas Aphong, who was a direct descendant of *The kung tek* and who served under the second Maharaja, *beTsas berung rnam rgyal* (ascended the throne in 1670).

17. While the Lepchas in general derive their origin from Mt. Kanchenjunga and its immediate environs, the various clans later on established legendary relations to various mountains, 773

[1] [i.e., during the funeral rites. —Analyst]

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 in whose neighbourhood they had settled, two or three clans often worshipping the same mountain. It became customary, that each clan had to perform an annual sacrifice to the spirit of its particular mountain. In regard to marriage, there is no obstacle—unless
582 a blood relationship exists or that people belong actually to the same clan—that members of two clans, which venerate the same peak, should not intermarry. In case that bride and bridegroom belong to clans, which worship two different mountains, the wife will have to sacrifice after the marriage to the sacred peak of her husbands clan.

18. They are made from a certain kind of reed; on the top of the stick cuts are made in
791 such a way, that these parts open in the form of a flower. These sticks are regarded as the symbol of the magical power, over which the sorcerer commands.

1 [see cat. 116, p. 36. - Analyst]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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273 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment
796 back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they
273 did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious
273 effects : for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 383.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to the monastery. But to eat an animal so killed wittingly is a sin without remedy and which will be heavily visited in the next reincarnation.

Lamas naturally cannot kill animals nor should they eat them on the same day that they have been killed; these prohibitions, however, do not extend to the lay members of the lama's family. In a house where there are no laymen lamas will call one in to act as a butcher for them; the butcher will get as fee twelve to fourteen lbs. of meat from the crutch of an ox, smaller but similar amounts from a goat or pig, and a drink of *chi* for a chicken. Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near; sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo. Chickens are usually knocked on the head. Boys above the age of ten can kill chickens and goats, and pigs after fifteen; but only a completely potent person will have the courage to kill an ox.

vi

With small exceptions the land and animals are considered to be the property of the householder, in whose name the house is registered and who is responsible for the payment of taxes. This householder is usually the oldest man in the prime of life in the family; a grandfather who has living sons usually gives the control in his life time over to his eldest son. In theory the property descends from elder to younger brother, and then, when all of the first generation are dead or too old, to the sons of the elder brother. In point of fact it is seldom that there is more than one family of each generation in one household; if the group becomes over-large the sons usually set up house on their own. If a son wishes to set up on his own during his father's life time, the father assigns to him, with the consent and co-operation of the Mandal and *youmi*[9] his proportionate share of the land. If when the father is dead the sons wish to separate the property is divided by the Mandal, *youmi*, and *gyapŏn*. The house is given to the eldest son, the animals and movable property divided up equally; the land is also divided up equally, the eldest son having the first choice and, if there is difference in the size of the fields, the biggest fields. In the event of the number of fields not being exactly divisible by the number

[9] *Youmi* and *gyapŏn* are village officials: for further explanation see Chapter Five, p. 131.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dead man's soul on its journey through the other worlds after death. 793
The Dorjé Lapoon are supposed to have renounced the things of this world; they are meant to be without property and to renounce such as they do possess; their nourishment is meant to be looked after by the other villagers; and, since they are meant to be fairly ascetic, it is expected that the Dorjé Lapoon will feast the other lamas yearly on their superfluity. Both *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon can perform the mystic ceremony of *kong-so klon*: this ceremony, performed fasting in a dark room to make up for arrears of duties left undone and to appease the devils in the neighbourhood, is believed to be fraught with considerable danger which would result in the death of anybody not properly qualified who tried to perform it. The rank of *omzet* corresponds fairly closely to that of bishop; but as far as I know there is no equivalent in the Christian hierarchy to the rank of Dorjé Lapoon.

There are about twenty lamas attached to the monastery of Lingthem; eleven live permanently in the village, two others more or less permanently; the rest live in neighbouring villages. The two Dorjé Lapoon are the father of Datoop and the 'big father' of Tafoor; they are always addressed and referred to by their title. Tafoor and Ongden are *omzet*, Tafoor being by far the more learned; Datoop is *chichembu*, Lumba *chithembu*, Jiroong *chéné*, Chudo and Pembu *kané*, Chanko (Ongden's eldest son), Chano and Takal *chapti-bu*. All the *tongpeun-bu* live in the neighbouring villages. Chano and Takal are both full-grown men—Chano is thirty and Takal fifty-seven—but they are both too stupid to rise above the lowest rank. There are four boys studying to become lamas: they are Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged eighteen, Tafoor's eldest son Chimpet, aged fourteen, Chano's eldest 'son' Mikmar, aged thirteen, and Chudo's eldest son aged four. The last named has not yet started to learn to read, but he is dressed in lama's clothes, and he plays on the floor at conducting services; this is [787] considered to be a most auspicious omen, and when he does start studying he should learn quickly and easily.

Corresponding with the hierarchy of lamas there is a hierarchy 792 ● of nuns (*in-é-bu*). Each rise in grade carries the same validating feast of a load of *chi*, 40 lbs. of grain and ten lbs. of oil or butter. The titles are similar, but they are completely pointless. Nuns cannot conduct ceremonies or perform exorcisms; in a very few of the lama's services, chiefly those connected with death, they have a subordinate role. There is no sort of compulsion or prophetic

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792 horoscope which forces a woman to become a nun; the duties are undertaken through individual piety, though it would seem as though the influence of father or husband was preponderating; of the nine nuns in Lingthem six were the wives or daughters of lamas: the other three were the wives of laymen who came from distant villages and I did not find out the positions of their fathers. A nun can start to study at any time between marriage and old age, taking as a teacher either a lama or the Dorjé Lapoon or *omzet* nun. Literacy is not insisted on for nuns and by far the greater number are in fact illiterate; the worship of nuns consists in the turning of prayer-wheels and the chanting of *mantra*. From such information as I can obtain nuns play a very small rôle in other Sikkim monasteries; and I suspect that the organisation prevailing in Lingthem is a Lepcha elaboration designed to give equal opportunity to men and women, since the Lepchas have a tendency not to disqualify anybody from any pursuit on account of sex.

Owing to the personality of the holder one exception must be made to the generalisation that the nuns' grades are meaningless. Mrs. Datoop was *inébu chithembu* and she showed that she would be well able to wield the *pankar* if necessary. Men say that they would be ashamed to be beaten by a woman, but they would not be able to protest.

The nuns are meant to spend three days every month at the monastery, worshipping by circumambulating the monastery turning their hand prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* and sitting in the *lha-gong* turning the big wheels to the accompaniment of the same chant. These visits take place on the 9th of the Tibetan month in honour of Chérézé, on the 14th in honour of Zobu Sangé Chumdendé, and on the 31st in honour of Guru Rimpuché. Little attention is paid to these festivals and often only two or three nuns turn up. Unlike the lamas, whose conduct is not so controlled, the nuns have to observe certain prohibitions; on the eve of a monastery visit they must not eat an evening meal nor copulate with their husbands; and on the day of the visit they must avoid eating meat and drinking *chi*. Most of the nuns, and all the more pious ones, were old women.

iv

793 The duties and devotions of lamas can be divided into three categories: personal and individual devotions, set monthly and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman) sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head Lama, or Dorje Lopön, has a rough sort of seat on which he, too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above the level of the floor.

The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

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from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number. It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen, which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [289]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks' feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep, was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fire-place to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little 136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the 346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the [77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to 792 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain
726 quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms,
727 and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

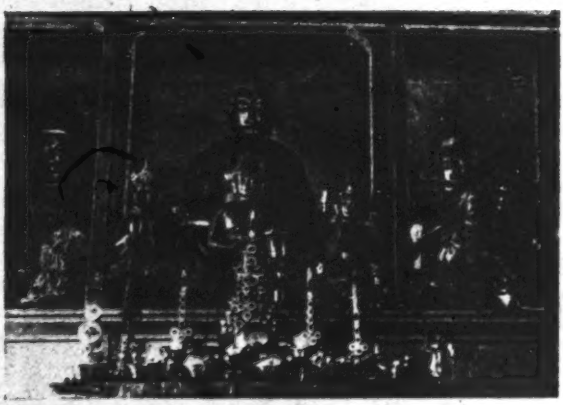
2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792

Lingtem Monastery.

778

Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *tormas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Guru Rimpoche.



796

Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

[Facing p. 72]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family ; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely : Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of
756 getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are
793 considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 has been smeared with blood and arrow-poison, and inscribed with
793 the victim's name and a spell written in Tibetan characters (the spell itself is believed to be in Burmese). This is put into a bamboo *patyoot* and is then offered to a man-eating devil, together with *cherkem*, consisting of grain floating in *chi* and blood, and other offerings. When the sorcerer is apprised of the arrival of the devil, either by a dream or by seeing him in reality he says to it 'So and so is my enemy, and I give his flesh to you to eat'; after that the bamboo is buried near one of the devil's houses. To make a person ill a quite simple ceremony is performed inside the monastery.

Tafoor, who told me about these rituals, is one of the three lamas of the neighbourhood who know how to perform them; the other two are the two Dorjé Lapoon, who received the knowledge from learned Tibetan lamas. Tafoor has never practised himself, and is not sure if the first Dorjé Lapoon ever did, but his uncle, the second Dorjé Lapoon, who taught him, has killed two people by sorcery. The first was when he was a student; a man came to his teacher and asked him to sorcerise somebody for him, and the teacher told his pupil to try his hand. The second instance was many years later, when his knife was stolen at a monastery feast; the thief, though he did not know it at the time, was one of the second Dorjé Lapoon's young pupils; the pupil did not know that the sorcery had been started against him or he could have averted it by returning the knife; only after his death, three months later, was his identity known and the lost knife recovered.

Nowadays the second Dorjé Lapoon refuses to perform sorcery any longer. The Maharajah has issued stringent orders forbidding the practice, and he himself, when on pilgrimage to Kathmandhu, made a vow not to indulge further in such wicked acts. Some time ago both Tafoor and Takneum *youmi* had cardamum fruit stolen and asked the second Dorjé Lapoon to sorcerise the thieves; but he replied that it was wicked to kill a man and that thieves should be dealt with by the police. According to lamaist ethics, it is a sin to kill a man by sorcery, but not a grievous sin if the lama afterwards helps his victim's soul to heaven. To kill a man with weapons is a
[688] far greater sin; for every person's body is the home of a hundred small gods called Tamba Rigya, and they are destroyed with the body.

About eighteen years ago the husband of Pumri—now the wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon, but at that time his uncle's wife—had a goat stolen; he found some of the stolen meat and brought

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754 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he
●793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/-. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman
[586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapön* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

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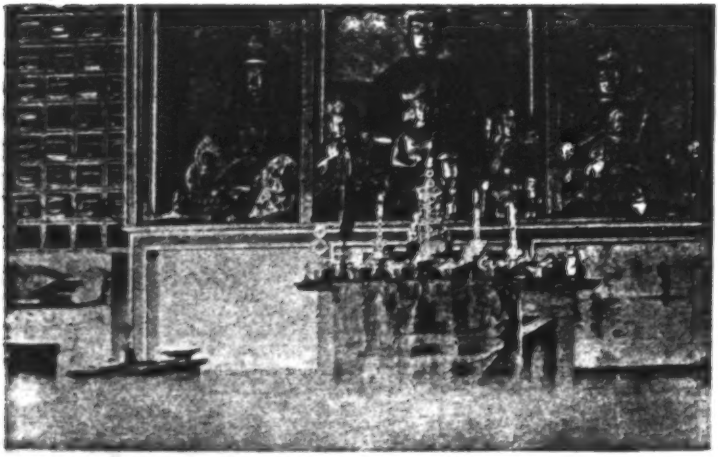

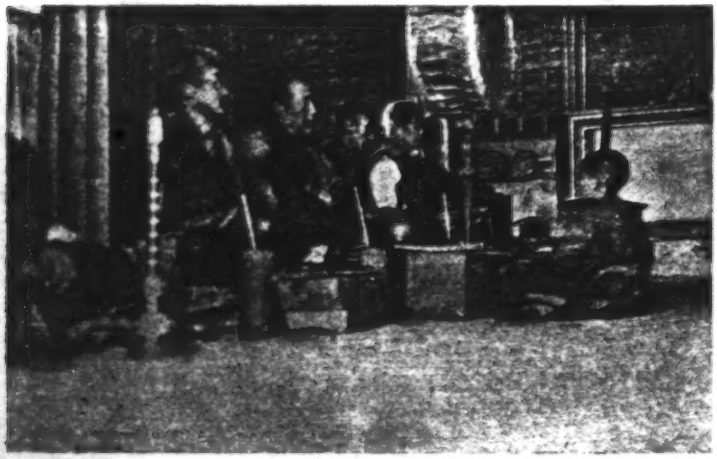

Above: THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below: THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *payoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

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tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

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756 ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is
793 thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are
578 seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

779 The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

[562] This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

538 It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

175 It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

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774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
[751] its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[8]
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

●793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[8] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

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and they are expected to support, at any rate in part, the Dorjé Lapoon and the monastery custodian; they also have to give fixed contributions to the feasts which validate the rise in grade of the higher ecclesiastics.

The Lepchas have been converts to lamaism at least one, and probably two centuries, but they have, if I may so express it, sterilised and ignored those aspects of the alien religion which were sharply opposed to their major existing attitudes. They have as it were, swallowed lamaism whole, but excreted the irritating portions. The mythology presented no difficulties; their pantheon was always large and expanding, through the divination of new supernaturals, and further numbers of similar supernaturals were easily accepted; it was understandable that foreigners should know of large numbers of new ones, almost as worthy of worship as the older established ones. The idea of a priesthood in which the priests need training by older priests was also one they already possessed; and that priests should be designated by divination (the horoscope) or by heredity, rather than by the possession of a hereditary spirit was an easy modification of existing attitudes. So too was the idea that the future could be learned by calculation, as well as by dreams and inspiration; the Lepchas have a complete belief in horoscopes and have incorporated them into their lives. Similarly the idea that an essential part of the efficacy of ritual lies in word-for-word repetition was one they already possessed; that, instead of learning by rote, these rituals could be found through the alien art of reading, was to their mind a distinct advantage for lamaism, and the books and those that read them are respected and revered. Similarly mystic contemplation, to expel devils or acquire supernatural powers, had its parallel in the *munthen*, the mystic communion, of the Mun.

The social organisation was a more alien concept; to a certain, though not completely formulated, extent, they have equated the organisation of lamas with that of the family; for a lama to sleep with the wife of an inferior lama is likened to the incest of an elder brother sleeping with his younger brother's wife, though there are no sanctions against such acts; the Dorjé Lapoon are equated with the grandfathers who withdraw from work at the end of their lives to be supported by their sons and grandsons. Nevertheless this parallel does not hold good altogether, and, in so far as they have accepted the social organisation of lamaism the Lepchas have incorporated a new and alien element into their lives. This

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religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

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no circumstances can the biological father teach his own son; any other relative who is properly qualified may do so. Thus Chimpet was being taught by his 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon. If the teacher resides in the same house no formalities occur, but this is very rare; nearly always teachers are strangers, and often live in a different village to the pupil's parents. When the teacher has been selected the parents present him with a big pig, a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and the child goes to live with his teacher for three years, usually working for his teacher in the day-time, and receiving instruction in the evening. The child is allowed to visit his parents from time to time, but if he runs away he will be beaten and sent back. According to Tafoor, when he was a student one teacher might have six or seven pupils, and in consequence emulation increased the general level of knowledge; nowadays in Zongu most teachers have only a single pupil at a time, so that there are no spurs to overcome native indolence.

The preliminary instruction is almost entirely confined to the teaching of reading; there are small excerpts from the scriptures specially prepared for this purpose; the pupil learns by heart one page at a time. He is also taught to a certain extent methods of prayer and the playing of musical instruments, but these branches are pursued more fully when the teacher has given his pupil his ceremonial qualification or *loong*. I cannot find out to what extent this notion of *loong* is Tibetan, and to what extent specifically Lepcha; it recurs in all stages of Lepcha life whenever there is a teacher-pupil situation. When the pupil has learned whatever he is being taught—the ritual of the Mun, a sacred story, the correct method of sacrificing after hunting, the offering of *sakyou faat*—his teacher gives him a scarf and usually a ceremonial meal or drink, after which the pupil does whatever he has been taught in front of and for his teacher. When the teacher has given his pupil *loong* the boy is formally presented at the monastery with the ceremony of *di-tset*. This ceremony is a very small affair; the pupil and his teacher drink tea with two lamas and then the novice is presented with some *chi*, a scarf and a rupee in the name of the monastery. A novice so received is called *chapti-bu*. Even before this reception a pupil will often accompany his teacher or father to all ceremonies, making himself useful by helping in the fashioning of ceremonial objects, by holding the big metal instruments, and possibly by beating the gongs or drums.

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Above *chapti-bu* there are six grades of lamas; to pass from one

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grade to another demands firstly increasing knowledge and secondly validating feasts—*chaptok klon*. There must be an interval of at least three years between each rise in grade. It is expected that the expenses of the first two validating feasts will be borne by the young lama's family, the subsequent ones by himself. In the validating feasts for the higher grades everybody in the neighbourhood has to make fixed contributions. All the feasts are accompanied by prayers and readings from the scriptures. 793

The grade above *chapti-bu* is *tongpeun-bu*. These are the players of the musical instruments—the conch shells, the *galing* (a metal instrument between a clarionet and a trumpet), the long telescopic trumpet (*pak-doong*) and the flute made from a human femur (*kong-ling*). People learn how to play these instruments by watching experts; for the *galing* which has a reed mouthpiece and is capable of a variety of notes, the learner holds a grass between his teeth and copies the fingering of the player; he may also be privately taught by friends. To my Occidental ears all the music sounded like the cacophony of a zoo in a thunderstorm, but the lamas recognise and teach tunes, or, as they say, 'numbers.' The validating feast which demands a pig, two maunds of grain and four pounds of oil, only lasts one day. *Tongpeun-bu* cannot perform any offices on their own, and practically occupy the position of choristers. [534]

Next in grade comes the *kané* whose one day feast calls for an ox, three maunds of grain and a maund of *chi*. The chief business of the *kané* is looking after the monastery and assisting the Dorjé Lapoon in their ceremonies; he also plays musical instruments. The *kané* are the only people who have to visit the monastery daily, to place the bowls of water on the altars at dawn, the *chimi* at sunset, and to burn incense. In the absence of superiors the *kané* is permitted to perform all offices of which he is capable; usually however his knowledge is slight and he has to ask his superiors for help; this help must be paid for with *chi*. The *kané* roughly corresponds to a deacon.

Kané and the ranks below barely qualify as lamas; they are in a way still students. Between the *kané* and the next grade *chéné* there is a very great gap. A *chéné* can perform all offices and in the absence of superiors can overlook monastery ceremonies; if he is old and experienced enough he can take pupils. The *chéné* is really a qualified priest. His validating feast is the most expensive of all: he has to give an ox, a pig, six maunds of grain, and ten maunds of *chi*. Each household has to contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and

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eight pounds of grain. The feasting lasts for three days at the end of which period the *chéné* by himself constructs an elaborate altar and dos eworship.

After the *chéné* comes the *chithembu*. His one-day feast calls for a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of oil. Each household must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain. The *chithembu* overlooks the good order of monastery gatherings and can take disciplinary action against quarrelsome, riotous or impious people; he also has the right to beat any lama, including his superiors, who may arrive late for a service or make mistakes in the reading. There is a special thonged stick called *pankar* which is kept for this purpose in the monastery. The *chithembu* are also meant to prevent the monastery or its precincts being used for improper purposes on the days when no services are held.

Only one man at a time can hold the office of *chithembu*. *Omzet*, the grade above *chithembu* demands considerable knowledge, and there are many not over ambitious or intelligent lamas who have risen to the grade of *chithembu* but are unable to go beyond. For these people, and for such as have not completed the six years since they were *chéné* there has been created the title of *chichembu*. *Chichembu* take their part in the monastery festivals; they are allowed to, but usually do not, perform ceremonies outside. The *chichembu* roughly resemble canons. No validating feast is required for assuming this title.

The validating feast for *omzet* lasts two or three days and calls for an ox, seven loads of *chi*, two loads of grain and 20 lbs. of oil. Each household must contribute 20 lbs. of *chi* and 16 lbs. of grain. The *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon are the two highest ranks in the lamaist organisation, the Dorjé Lapoon being selected rather for their age than for any other qualification; they are the oldest and most respected of the learned lamas. The *omzet* is the instructor *par excellence*: he is in charge of all monastery ceremonies and is expected to be most learned and competent. The one-day validating feast of the Dorjé Lapoon only demands a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of butter; everybody else must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain and must present the new Dorjé Lapoon with a scarf and a rupee. The Dorjé Lapoon do no organisational work beyond examining candidates before each rise in grade; they particularly go in for mystic practices and contemplation and they alone are capable of conducting the

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dead man's soul on its journey through the other worlds after death. 793
The Dorjé Lapoon are supposed to have renounced the things of this world; they are meant to be without property and to renounce such as they do possess; their nourishment is meant to be looked after by the other villagers; and, since they are meant to be fairly ascetic, it is expected that the Dorjé Lapoon will feast the other lamas yearly on their superfluity. Both *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon can perform the mystic ceremony of *kong-so klon*: this ceremony, performed fasting in a dark room to make up for arrears of duties left undone and to appease the devils in the neighbourhood, is believed to be fraught with considerable danger which would result in the death of anybody not properly qualified who tried to perform it. The rank of *omzet* corresponds fairly closely to that of bishop; but as far as I know there is no equivalent in the Christian hierarchy to the rank of Dorjé Lapoon.

There are about twenty lamas attached to the monastery of Lingthem; eleven live permanently in the village, two others more or less permanently; the rest live in neighbouring villages. The two Dorjé Lapoon are the father of Datoop and the 'big father' of Tafoor; they are always addressed and referred to by their title. Tafoor and Ongden are *omzet*, Tafoor being by far the more learned; Datoop is *chichembu*, Lumba *chithembu*, Jiroong *chéné*, Chudo and Pembu *kané*, Chanko (Ongden's eldest son), Chano and Takal *chapti-bu*. All the *tongpeun-bu* live in the neighbouring villages. Chano and Takal are both full-grown men—Chano is thirty and Takal fifty-seven—but they are both too stupid to rise above the lowest rank. There are four boys studying to become lamas: they are Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged eighteen, Tafoor's eldest son Chimpet, aged fourteen, Chano's eldest 'son' Mikmar, aged thirteen, and Chudo's eldest son aged four. The last named has not yet started to learn to read, but he is dressed in lama's clothes, and he plays on the floor at conducting services; this is [787] considered to be a most auspicious omen, and when he does start studying he should learn quickly and easily.

Corresponding with the hierarchy of lamas there is a hierarchy 792
of nuns (*in-é-bu*). Each rise in grade carries the same validating feast of a load of *chi*, 40 lbs. of grain and ten lbs. of oil or butter. The titles are similar, but they are completely pointless. Nuns cannot conduct ceremonies or perform exorcisms; in a very few of the lama's services, chiefly those connected with death, they have a subordinate role. There is no sort of compulsion or prophetic

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792 horoscope which forces a woman to become a nun; the duties are undertaken through individual piety, though it would seem as though the influence of father or husband was preponderating; of the nine nuns in Lingthem six were the wives or daughters of lamas: the other three were the wives of laymen who came from distant villages and I did not find out the positions of their fathers. A nun can start to study at any time between marriage and old age, taking as a teacher either a lama or the Dorjé Lapoon or *omzet* nun. Literacy is not insisted on for nuns and by far the greater number are in fact illiterate; the worship of nuns consists in the turning of prayer-wheels and the chanting of *mantra*. From such information as I can obtain nuns play a very small rôle in other Sikkim monasteries; and I suspect that the organisation prevailing in Lingthem is a Lepcha elaboration designed to give equal opportunity to men and women, since the Lepchas have a tendency not to disqualify anybody from any pursuit on account of sex.

Owing to the personality of the holder one exception must be made to the generalisation that the nuns' grades are meaningless. Mrs. Datoop was *inébu chithembu* and she showed that she would be well able to wield the *pankar* if necessary. Men say that they would be ashamed to be beaten by a woman, but they would not be able to protest.

The nuns are meant to spend three days every month at the monastery, worshipping by circumambulating the monastery turning their hand prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* and sitting in the *lha-gong* turning the big wheels to the accompaniment of the same chant. These visits take place on the 9th of the Tibetan month in honour of Chérézé, on the 14th in honour of Zobu Sangé Chumdendé, and on the 31st in honour of Guru Rimpuché. Little attention is paid to these festivals and often only two or three nuns turn up. Unlike the lamas, whose conduct is not so controlled, the nuns have to observe certain prohibitions; on the eve of a monastery visit they must not eat an evening meal nor copulate with their husbands; and on the day of the visit they must avoid eating meat and drinking *chi*. Most of the nuns, and all the more pious ones, were old women.

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793 The duties and devotions of lamas can be divided into three categories: personal and individual devotions, set monthly and

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APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.

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793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

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LAMAS PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MONASTERY COURTYARD

Above : The son of Lharibu Chujen and Tafoor play ' clarionets '.

Below : Kutt'r, Lumba's son, and Chudo play telescopic trumpets.

[facing p. 208]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions. 787 [732]

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest. 793 ●

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects. [556]

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the 781 787

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But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated; Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *ptso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

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I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000
unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114
the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793
Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346
two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822]
it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778]
altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373
away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782]
either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

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346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

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774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[53b] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

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unreformed sects. These are the so-called "red hat" Lamas, 795
as opposed to the reformed "yellow-hat" or *Ge-lug-pa*, which form the established Church of Tibet proper. The Nin-ma-pa is more freely tinged than any other with pre-Buddhist practices and its Lamas are required neither to remain celibate nor to practise abstinence. "It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha. Its mystic insight is Mohautpanna or the "great ultimate perfection." Its tutelaries are "The fearful Vajra and Dub-pa-koh-gye." Its guardian demon is "The Lord *Gur*. It worships the Guru Padma-sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal, expressive of his different moods at different times, and also his favourite Kashmiri teacher, Sri Sinha, and the Indian teacher of the latter, Gah-rab-Dorje, who derived his inspiration from the celestial Buddha, Vajra-satwa, who in turn was inspired by the primordial deity, Samantabhadra-Buddha."

There are, of course, in Sikkim many learned Lamas who 793
would find no difficulty in expounding the canon of their 795
Church. The Abbot of Lachen, for instance, which is only a long day's march from Lingtem, is a man of quite remarkable intelligence and learning. Among others Mme. David-Neel, the famous French Tibetan scholar and traveller, has paid tribute to his exceptional ability as a teacher, as has my friend Marco Pallis, who also studied with him for a time. But men such as he are rareties in any community; and as for the Lamas in Lingtem I doubt if they could even name the sect to which they belong. But in Lingtem, and in fact all over the Jongu district, the Church is nothing more than a spare-time occupation. There are about eighteen Lamas attached to the Lingtem Monastery and all of these are engaged in the normal occupation of an ordinary Lepcha villager. They attend at the monastery for periodical ceremonies, usually twice each month, but their chief function consists in conducting private services in connection with illness, crops, house-building, and so on, for

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793 individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where
795 animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these
[782] ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and
[756] other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or
goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun;
793 for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a
very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually
taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for
he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with
those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose
[787 the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a
756] *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able
to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this
being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I
think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is
merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman*
implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary
793 layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and
755 effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is
merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony.
This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best
medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether
Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for
instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand
repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a
cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather
than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith
in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but
because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied
only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know
how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of
these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but
in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage
to Lingtem for the purpose!

793 A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it
787 is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at
birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[431] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

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793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

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young Lama not already know how to play these instruments 793
he is particularly enjoined to practise assiduously; and I can personally testify that he does so!

The next stage is known as *Ka-Ne*, and to attain this a feast similar to the last must again be given. A Ka-Ne also plays on musical instruments and in addition he is permitted to offer lamps to the monastery idols, and to change the ceremonial bowls of water every morning and evening. He also assists in making the ceremonial cones of dough known as *Tormo;* but still he takes no part in the reading of books. To attain the next rank, known as *Che-ne*, a much bigger feast is necessary. This time an ox, sufficient millet to make forty maunds of Chi, and three maunds of rice are necessary. The initiation ceremony, which seems to consist mostly in eating and drinking, lasts for three days and nights. The Lama will himself usually attempt to cultivate the necessary millet from which the *Chi* is made, but in view of the enormous quantity necessary the whole village will generally lend a hand in providing it. Most of the village is present during the ceremony; and in addition to the food and drink provided by the Lama himself each household provides eight pounds of parched rice and a certain amount of *Chi*. During the festivities the newly appointed Che-Ne will prepare the ceremonial altar, together with its concomitant *Tormas*. He is now qualified to take part in all ceremonies, but as Che-Ne his special duties are to be responsible for the ritually correct performance of all monastic services. His function is somewhat similar to that of the Esquire Bedells at Cambridge. He may now perform ceremonies outside the monastery for private individuals, and if of sufficient age may even be entrusted with the teaching of young novices.

The next stage, known as *Chōtembu*, requires another big feast, but the festivities for this last for one day only. In addition to the food and drink the newly promoted Lama is also required to provide ten pounds either of oil or butter for burning in the ceremonial lamps. There is only one Chōtembu in each monastery, and he is in charge of all disciplinary

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[243] matters. He is permitted to beat other Lamas, and also laymen who are slack in the performance of their duties, not excluding even the Dorje-Lopön, or head of the monastery. It may be noted, however, that he has no authority to beat people once they have left the monastery or its grounds.

The next rank is known as *Umzet.* This, too, necessitates a big feast, which is generally attended by the whole village and lasts from two to three days. An Umzet teaches but has no authority to beat people. He is really under-study to the head of the monastery, and is usually not advanced to this rank unless it is considered that he is capable eventually of succeeding his master.

Dorje-Lopön is the highest rank of all, and there is usually one at the head of every monastery, though in Lingtem there are two. In addition to the usual feast each Lama and every householder in the village presents a woven scarf to the Dorje-Lopön. He is not required to keep all these scarves and generally sells them again at half their usual price. Thus, people who do not bring one with them to the ceremony may buy one from the Dorje-Lopön himself and re-present it, so that the offering really turns into a kind of cash transaction. There is no limit to the number of each rank of Lama in any particular monastery, and in practice the senior Dorje-Lopön, should there be more than one, is the titular head, the actual power being usually in the hands of some more active member of the community, more often than not the Umzet, as was the case in Lingtem. For the performance of actual [242] ceremonies most of the Lamas wear the usual maroon robe as worn by Lamas in Tibet. Unlike that country, however, there are here no differences in dress by which a Lama's rank may be recognised.

In addition to the Lamas there are also in Lingtem a number of nuns, or *Inebu*, as they are called. In Tibet, while female Lamas are given a very inferior position, scarcely higher than lay devotees, they are required to practise chastity, and usually live an ascetic life in remote and lonely convents. There is one such place at Tatsang, on the road to

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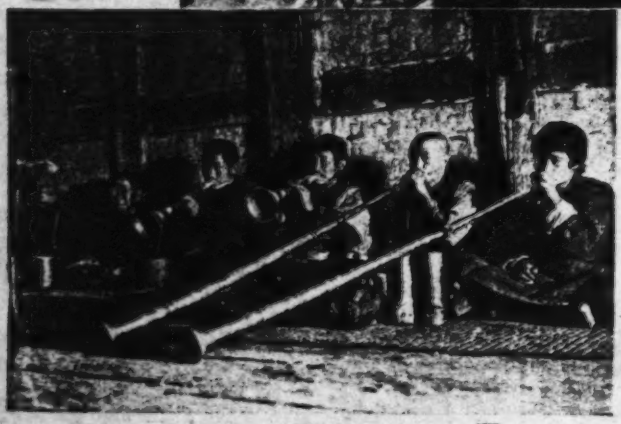
Lamaist music.

Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.

[Facing p. 76]

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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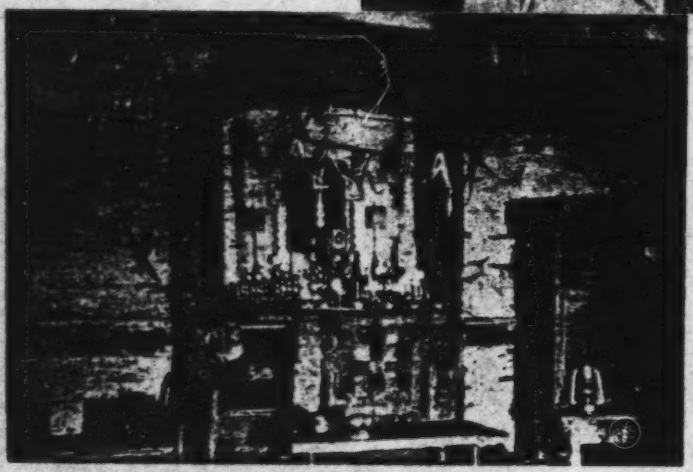

[facing p. 77]

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Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were completely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

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793 834 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 576 793 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait, which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

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When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels. 793

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

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159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
[785] days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
[793] complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

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The second Dorje Lopön.

The senior Dorje Lopön.

[facing p. 84]

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756 possesses is revealed to him in dreams. Although there were several Padim in Lingtem no one seemed to employ them, preferring always to call in a Mun. The difference between the two seems to be similar to that between a chemist, for instance, and a doctor, the Mun, of course, representing the latter.

756 There is, so far as I know, no ceremony which Mun
● 793 perform in Lingtem that in a more orthodox Lamaist society could not be performed equally well by Lamas: and while the latter have usurped many of the Mun's functions, at the present time the two work side by side in perfect amity, perhaps because of the equable Lepcha temperament. There is not the slightest rivalry between them, and when a Lama is called in to advise he will often recommend some ceremony for which a Mun is necessary.

756 A man does not become a Mun or Padim by inclination, but because of an irresistible compulsion manifested through some illness. Most of those with whom we talked, although they liked the presents that their patients brought them, would have preferred to be like ordinary men. There is only a certain number in every clan; and when one dies the talent passes on. Thus, although it is possible for a mother and son both to be Mun the talent is not hereditary; nor is it necessary for a man to be a Padim before becoming a Mun, although this sometimes happens.

Gongyop, the most popular Mun in Lingtem, became one only five years ago. He is at present forty-eight, and was a Padim for twenty years before he became a Mun. When he was in his early twenties he was taken very ill; and was weak and listless for a long time. The cause of his illness was eventually diagnosed, and it was seen that only by becoming a Padim could he recover his health. He could eat no rice, nor could he drink *chi;* and his limbs felt as though they had been tied up, and he could not walk. He remained in this state for nearly two years. However, as soon as the cause of his trouble was discovered he rapidly recovered. He became a Padim by the mere performance of the necessary ceremony;

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in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined. 793 755

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household. [576]

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

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●793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

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finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying [516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864]
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[465] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

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754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf 793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

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[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic, 756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any 832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many 777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

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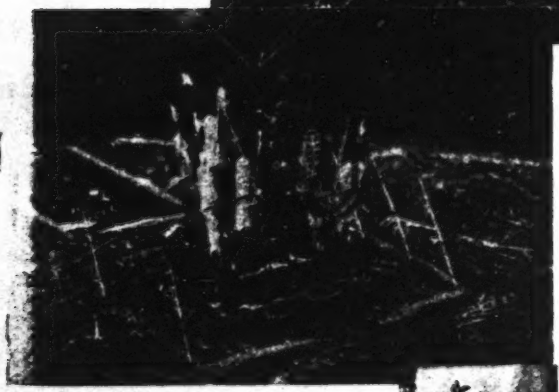
796 [793]

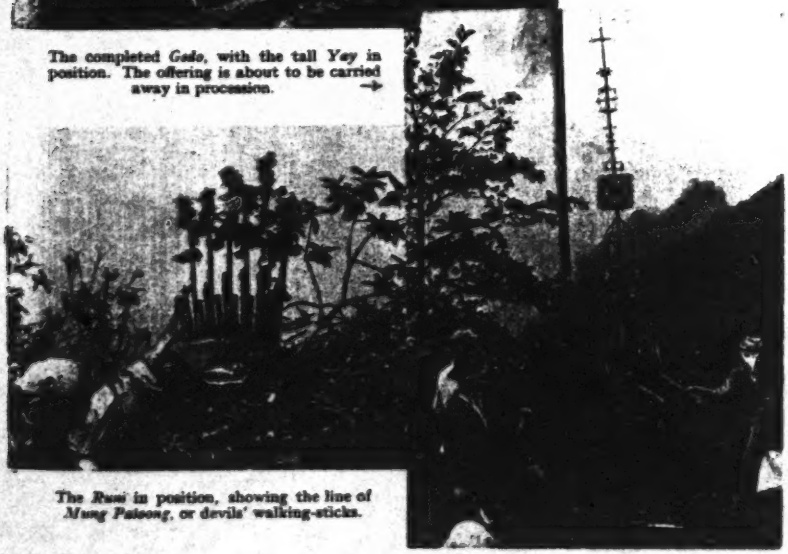
Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Cherim* ceremony.

[778]



The *Gedo*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gedo*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →



The *Rumi* in position, showing the line of *Mung Palsong*, or devils' walking-sticks.

[Facing p. 154]

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but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [773]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

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231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

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again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 584
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

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law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793 ●
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

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793 them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are
796 sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

000 Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the
[157] course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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773 confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tak bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

000 9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

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791 177 Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa wo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa wo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

791 177 771 A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bo* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are

LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODHIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [793]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [794]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing. [821] [753]

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly [278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[753 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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he had done this, he went up to Tlamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[58]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun. Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else. In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly overtake the one so elected."

The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-fär Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength, so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

58. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-ca-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293] wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

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nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the 534
sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) 293
or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), 778
nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling),
nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa).
All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable 793
to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian 171
Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neigh- [754]
bouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun [778
wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, 787]
he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

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In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found 789
many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which 171
had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[87] Their dances have certain [535]
characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

87. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

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793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the
789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the
171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing,
[776] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman :
[778] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an
[781] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit.
[177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer
[754] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[788] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(*h*) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[103] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult. [776]

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796 Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782 The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171 the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793 such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

103. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples 771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a 793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were 824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the 825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even 222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will 261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water [273] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another 252 root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, 262 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

ii

In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery
794 precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were
[868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

iii

621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
[212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753]
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [773]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [774]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION III: THE PEOPLE OF MAYEL

i

I stated earlier that the Lepchas have two or perhaps three religions. My reason for this statement is that the ritual connected with harvesting and hunting, though performed by Mun, have a number of features which do not occur elsewhere. It seems to me possible that the worship of the people of Mayel, and perhaps of Pong *rum* the god of hunters, is of a different origin to the other Mun ceremonies; unfortunately too little is known about the ritual of neighbouring tribes to enable profitable speculation to be made as to whether either or both ceremonies are relatively modern importations from outside, or whether they are on the contrary the oldest Lepcha customs. The most outstanding differences with other Mun ritual, and indeed with ordinary Lepcha life, is, first, a discrimination against women, secondly, an insistance on virginity for some of the celebrants, and thirdly a suggestion of the danger of menstruating women. Women may perform the sacrifice to the people of Mayel, but if they do so the ceremony is curtailed and fewer objects employed; they not only cannot sacrifice to Pong *rum* but must not even be aware when the sacrifice takes place; and the popped corn and *chi* which are employed in it, if not made by a man, which is preferable, must be made by a virgin girl. The chief offerings to the people of Mayel are the *lafét* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*; the small bird for the *lafét* must be killed by a virgin boy, and the strained *chi* poured into the buttered cup by a virgin girl.

This insistance upon virginity is unparalleled in Lepcha life;[1]

[1] The only other instance is in the sacrifice to a pair of demons who cause a coughing disease (? tuberculosis) and whose presence and ritual were divined and by a Nandjému less than ten years ago. For this ceremony the popped corn must be made by a virgin girl, and the Mun must fast for twenty-four hours before the sacrifice. Only two people know how to perform this very modern importation.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[538] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

unreformed sects. These are the so-called "red hat" Lamas, 795 as opposed to the reformed "yellow-hat" or *Ge-lug-pa*, which form the established Church of Tibet proper. The Nin-ma-pa is more freely tinged than any other with pre-Buddhist practices and its Lamas are required neither to remain celibate nor to practise abstinence. "It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha. Its mystic insight is Mohautpanna or the "great ultimate perfection." Its tutelaries are "The fearful Vajra and Dub-pa-koh-gye." Its guardian demon is "The Lord *Gur*. It worships the Guru Padma-sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal, expressive of his different moods at different times, and also his favourite Kashmiri teacher, Sri Sinha, and the Indian teacher of the latter, Gah-rab-Dorje, who derived his inspiration from the celestial Buddha, Vajra-satwa, who in turn was inspired by the primordial deity, Samantabhadra-Buddha."

There are, of course, in Sikkim many learned Lamas who 793 would find no difficulty in expounding the canon of their 795 Church. The Abbot of Lachen, for instance, which is only a long day's march from Lingtem, is a man of quite remarkable intelligence and learning. Among others Mme. David-Neel, the famous French Tibetan scholar and traveller, has paid tribute to his exceptional ability as a teacher, as has my friend Marco Pallis, who also studied with him for a time. But men such as he are rareties in any community; and as for the Lamas in Lingtem I doubt if they could even name the sect to which they belong. But in Lingtem, and in fact all over the Jongu district, the Church is nothing more than a spare-time occupation. There are about eighteen Lamas attached to the Lingtem Monastery and all of these are engaged in the normal occupation of an ordinary Lepcha villager. They attend at the monastery for periodical ceremonies, usually twice each month, but their chief function consists in conducting private services in connection with illness, crops, house-building, and so on, for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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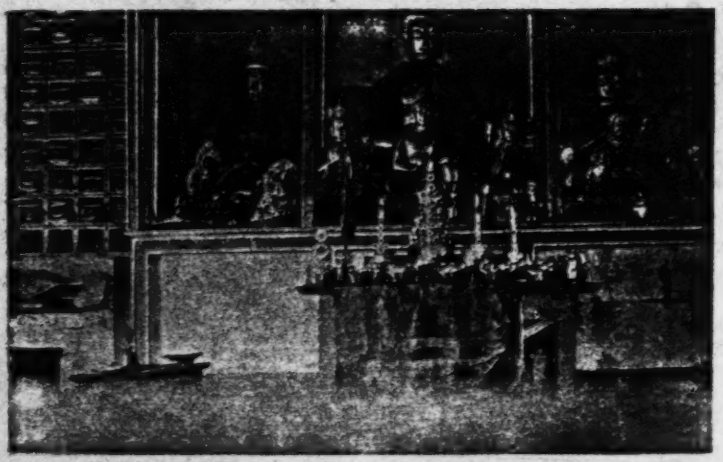

Above: THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below: THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *patyoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

1: Gorer J,5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 year. There are actually only forty-two householders for twenty-four feasts, but some of the richer households or those which consist of more than one working family give the feasts by themselves. The feasts for Guru Rimpuché are provided by lamas, those for Kinchenjunga by laymen. The duration of the ceremony depends upon the amount of food and drink provided; if the feast is plentiful, it may last thirty-six hours, starting at sunset on the preceding evening and continuing till the following dawn; if the feast is a poor one it will only last during the daylight hours of the day of ceremony.

In essentials the ceremonies are all similar. An altar-piece—its elaboration depending on the size of the festival—is fabricated by the competent lamas out of a variety of materials, of which the chief are flour mixed to a paste, butter either white or coloured and occasionally coloured threads. The ground-work 778 of the altar pieces are blocks of wood, usually flat for Guru 796 Rimpuché and raised in five mounds (thrones) for Kinchenjunga. On these are placed more-or-less life-like dough images of the chief gods, surrounded by innumerable and almost shapeless cones to represent the minor gods and attendants and satellites. Round the image of Kinchenjunga are represented the hundred gods which inhabit the body of the donor of the feast. Those dough images are decorated with white and coloured butter to represent their clothes and jewels. Sometimes a 'halo' shaped like an arum leaf is placed behind the chief gods; the halo consists of elaborate and very pretty flower decorations made in coloured butter on tin shields. Occasionally the altar-piece is surmounted by small dough birds fixed on thin splinters of bamboo; or alternatively there is added to the monastery altars materials which are practically always used in private and personal ceremonies: a *deu* or 'palace of supernaturals' consisting of elaborate geometrical shapes in coloured thread fastened round a central bamboo; and splinters with tufts of wool stuck at odd intervals down their length which are called *pong* and which are considered to represent the clouds which surround the homes of the supernaturals. Always before the commencement of the preparation of the altar-piece a small cone is made to represent Gett'r *moong*, the demon of quarrels. The quarrel demon is first invoked and then destroyed in order to prevent quarrelling or evil words taking place during the ensuing ceremony and feast.

796 When the altar is prepared the musicians start playing in twos and threes and big groups. If the altar has been made the night

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

before the ceremony the musicians will continue playing at intervals all night, but the laymen do not start arriving till the next morning. In the morning all those who have been invited by the givers of the feast, which, except in the case of very poor people or very unpopular ones, means practically the whole village, start arriving at the monastery, each bringing with them some contribution in the form of food or *chi*, which will be of assistance to the giver of the feast. During the whole day the lamas sit in their seats in two parallel rows from the altar to the door, except when they go out for a slight rest and change of air. Their food and drink is brought to them at their seats in the monastery and they have permanently a *patyoot* of *chi* in front of them. The worship consists of special readings and chantings from the sacred scriptures interspersed with music.

Owing to the fact that the feasts in honour of Kinchenjunga are given by laymen certain precautions are taken and certain opportunities are given for acquiring merit which are not considered necessary for the feasts given by lamas. The precautions consist of the offering of *cherkem*—grain floating in *chi*—which is thrown out to the devils by a layman with cries of *Lo chi-do*—' take this ' —and the burning of a bonfire of aromatic herbs and leaves to gratify the supernaturals. The lay-giver may, if he wishes, acquire merit by performing the ceremonial dance called *da-floh* before the altar, prancing and chanting in front of a folded cloth on the top of which his hat is laid, with the knife to the right and the scabbard to the left. In the evening the altar-piece is perambulated three times round the monastery and is then broken up; the dough is eaten (lamas however may not eat it) and the butter smeared on the heads of those standing round; this butter is regarded as a sort of sacrament which conveys blessings on those whose head is smeared with it. The Dorjé Lapoon in person anoints the heads of the lay-givers of the feasts and their families. Although this ends the religious part of the ceremony, gossiping and drinking may continue all night if sufficient *chi* has been provided.

Calendrical festivals take place frequently, at relatively fixed dates throughout the year. The greater number are apotropaic, intended to ward away those evils inherent in the season: illness in the winter and summer, hail and predatory animals when the crops are growing, quarrelling when the harvests are gathered, misfortunes in the new year, and so on. These ceremonies vary very considerably in elaboration. Some, such as the ceremony to

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appease Débrong *pa-no*, the king of hail, will be performed semi-privately in the house of the officiating lama, a little grain for the sacrifice having been collected by the *gyapōn* from every household in the village so that the ceremony is felt to be for the benefit of the whole community, though practically none may be present at it. Others are extremely elaborate; Boom koor lasts for three days. This ceremony is somewhat similar to beating the bounds; the sixteen volumes of the Boom are carried in procession with all the musical instruments by the lamas in their finest dresses, all round the village; the procession follows a fixed route with points where it stops for prayers and feasting, the feast taking place in the biggest house in the neighbourhood and being provided by all the dwellers in that district; the procession itself takes forty-eight hours and the night is spent at some house half-way distant on the route, in the procession I saw, at the Mandal's house. The evening before the procession starts an elaborate ceremony is held to ward off all the predatory animals and thieves and destructive demons who would harm the growing crops; and when the procession has returned to the monastery and the sacred books have been replaced an all night service and picnic follows. This ceremony is held after the sowing of crops is completed to protect the crops and ward off all evil from the community; everybody except infants in arms, invalids, and the old and infirm join in it.

To describe in detail all the calendrical ceremonies which I have witnessed, let alone those that I have been told about, would be beyond the scope of this book. The ceremonies occur at almost weekly intervals, and though each differs considerably in detail from all the others, the general effect and intention of all are very similar. An extremely elaborate and detailed effigy of the supernatural whom it is intended to appease is made; the supernatural is invoked with prayer, music, readings from the scripture and gifts; is adored as a god; and then, whether it be in general benevolent or malevolent, is prayed to go away, and its image is taken some way away and abandoned or destroyed. Some of the ceremonies which take place outside the monastery are accompanied by parallel ceremonies performed by Mun.

I only propose to describe in detail a single calendrical ceremony, the destruction of the quarrel demon, which takes place in the autumn. This ceremony is more vivid and dramatised than the greater number of lamaist exorcisms; its details however resemble most of the other exorcisms.

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Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils Soo-*moong* (enmity of speech), Gé-*moong* (enmity of thought) and Thor-*moong* (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity Soo-gé-thor is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead. 796 578

First of all a very large image of the supernatural Thorgyop *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of Soo-gé-thor and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block[7] on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan 'we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man'. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs. 796 [532]

Another image is made of Soo-gé-thor, this time recumbent and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures. [532]

Finally a third image called Sor-so-mu is made; this is a three-sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to [532]

[7] A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year 'animal' cycle.

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796 is the direction in which the devil has gone. Should the pointed end turn backwards, that is towards the thrower, it is a very bad omen; it means that quarrelling will take place in the succeeding year.

V

755 The exorcisms and apotropaic rites performed by lamas for the benefit of individuals are even more numerous and varied than the calendrical rites. There is scarcely an ill which man is heir to which has not its individual and appropriate ceremonial remedy. Like the calendrical ceremonies by far the greater number consist of making an image of the possessing devil, invoking it, worshipping it, and then destroying it.[8] Besides the image of the central devil there are always a number of minor ritual objects, the most important of which is a twisted piece of dough called *chongbu-tipkü*. At the end of the ceremony the sufferer, or, in some cases all present, have this piece of dough ceremonially waved over them (*pék*) by the officiating lama as a ritual cleansing. In the greater number of ceremonies this is the only rôle which the sufferer plays. He is often not even in the same room as the lamas. At the beginning of the service the devil is always erected facing the lamaist altar; when the ceremony is finished the model with its stand is turned round to face the house-door; a double line of flour is traced from the devil to the door as the route it must take to go out, and the image on its board is then carried away either into the forest or to the place where four roads meet. For some exorcisms those who carry the devil have to go through some ritual or be ceremonially purified before they are readmitted into the house.

In some of the exorcisms a dough image of the sufferer is made and offered to the devil in lieu of the body of the sufferer; and in others, especially when it is divined that the devil has been sent through human agency (usually unwittingly: evil or envious thoughts can unleash a devil without the responsibility of the thinker) the devil, in the form of a winged insect, is ritually killed by the lamas with their sacred dagger. Finally, in some apotropaic ceremonies the threatened person himself plays a rôle; thus, for the ceremony *doak-po doat* the sufferer has to progress through the smaller squares of a big magic square, gradually having all his appearance changed: he starts off dressed in black, carrying a stick,

[8] Outlines and descriptions of some lamaist ceremonies will be found in Chapter Thirteen and especially in Appendix III.

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY I

Above : The Mandal and Gongyos (arm only) fill the containers of the *rum* offered to the devils with milk and tea.

Below : Pumri offers strained *chi* in a cup to the gods of Kinchenjunga. Old Kahlyeu, on her left, offers grain.

[Facing p. 220]

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY II

The model of Mamoo *moong* with the '*deu*'—the nine-storeyed devil's palace made out of coloured threads—in position down by the *chotes* just before the worship begins. In the foreground are Katel and Jiroong. Behind, Chala Mandal and Lumba.

[facing p. 224]

I: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

each household. There are however a few ceremonies when a Mun sacrifices and prophesies for the whole community; but all that I have seen or heard of are adjuncts to lamaist ceremonies.

In the Cherim ceremony which is held twice yearly, once at the beginning of the rains, and again at the beginning of winter, to keep off illness from the community, three separate rituals are performed, two by Mun, and the third by lamas. The communal nature of these sacrifices is emphasized and at least one individual from each household has to be present, and each household contributes a little of the grain. So that the Mun can participate the ceremony is held on neutral ground, when I saw it on March 28th., by the *choten* below the monastery and just outside the sacred precincts.

The first part of the ceremony consists of an offering to the devils: this ceremony is called *rum* after the name given to the chief article of sacrifice. This is a large basket filled with earth and covered with a banana leaf into which are inserted a number of varied articles with eight[11] of each sort of article: 'devil's walking-sticks' consisting of decorated bamboos with flowers inserted in holes, containers of water, milk, tea and *chi*, pieces of mica, stems of wormwood decorated with threads, fresh eggs, heaps of grain, and dried bird, dried fish and ginger. There are also offered two *ta-ming* which consist of long sticks to which are attached wrapped in leaves samples of every sort of food and drink. When the offerings have been made the Mun, sitting opposite them, intones a long chant to invoke the gods, and then takes the eggs and holds them to his forehead while he shuts his eyes and concentrates; the line which he envisages inside the eggs foretells the future health of the community. In the spring of 1937 Gongyop saw 'a fairly straight path' which signifies that there will be a mild epidemic of stomach trouble. Four years ago, when there was a bad epidemic of dysentery he saw 'a curved, almost spiral path, with a knot at the end of it.'

The second ceremony, also performed by Mun, consists of offerings to the Gods of Kinchenjunga and the Plains, and is called Tsandong. The offerings consist of rice, butter, *chimi*, a rupee and eggs. The sacrifice is in two parts; first grain and strained *chi* are thrown out by the Mun and her assistant (in March 1937 Pumri was assisted by old Kahlyeu) and later a goat is dedicated and then killed.

[11] It may be noted that for Mun and lama odd numbers are lucky, even unlucky.

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamco *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nakleut* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chazé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

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These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace' consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo. This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom; in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representation of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and readings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began; then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use); and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbutipkū* round her image were handed out for all to wave over themselves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar. It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in procession across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments, as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

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756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away. On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the 796 Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

IV

756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The 783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth [843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot [585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relations, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

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windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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Lingtem Monastery.

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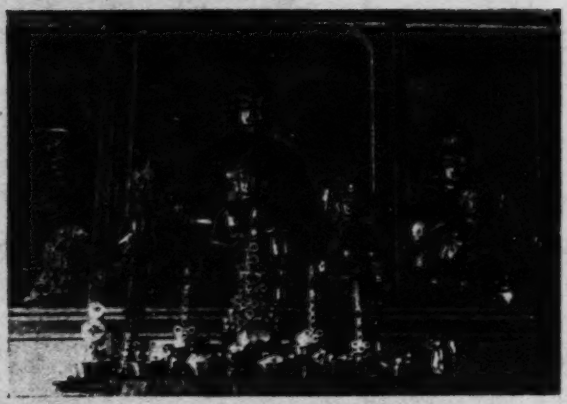
Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *tormas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Guru Rimpoche.



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Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

[Facing p. 72]

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When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopōn appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

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825 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus
171 it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

* * * * *

796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

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The place selected for the ceremony was in a small 796 clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchin- 823 junga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more 782 venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border 823 of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

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823 and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

796 778 The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and constructed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

796 When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

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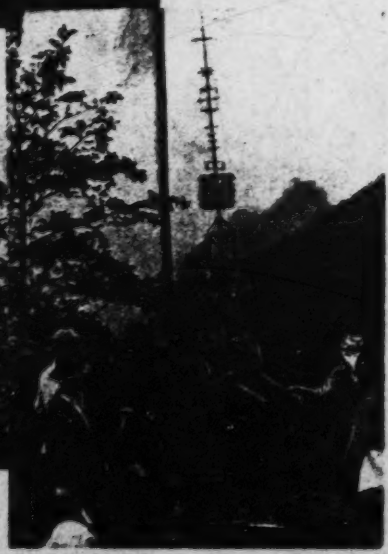
[793]

Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Cherim* ceremony.

[778]

The *Gado*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gado*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →



The *Rusi* in position, showing the line of *Mung Pulosing*, or devils' walking-sticks.

[Facing p. 154]

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796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been 796 801 previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green [373] tea-leaves and ghee. Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

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●796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 384] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

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of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796 winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241] been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [532] second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824 ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821] clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412] the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

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796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was [865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning 778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form of *Yay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented [776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

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several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517]
roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning
sing-song voice.

796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[788 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

1 [ie. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tafoor.--Analyst]

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw anything approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was not marked. 796 781

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar and several men started to move off down the path, carrying the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the *Deu* would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance. Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet. After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a station bell. 796 533 781

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow. After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in position until destroyed by wind and rain. 787

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was told that this was on account of there being no reading of the sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be 796 571

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present. Every household was, however, represented, and the communal nature of the ceremony was further emphasised by the numerous offerings of grain which, together with the cost of the sacrificial goat, had been contributed by everyone in the village.

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CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

796 [293 533] DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

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3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought contributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

[431]

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While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796 the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779] book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796 saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522 Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831 the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781] at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796 garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358] Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

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●796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 533 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 789 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 778 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

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a separate name. It was found that the entire company could not be accommodated on the *Pong Rum* itself, so the overflow was arranged on a brass tray, which the Lamas, however, later forgot about and never put on the altar. In the centre of the *Pong Rum* and immediately in front of the central cone was a yak's head (*Yok thyak*) made of dough, but nobody seemed to know its significance. The preparation of the entire offering took four men roughly five hours. At the end of the ceremony it will be broken up and eaten; but the men who have made it are not allowed to taste it, which seems unjust. This morning the whole thing was brought out of the monastery and each of the five main cones further embellished by the addition of a sort of tin cape on which a design was built up in butter coloured bright red, blue, yellow and green. The whole thing now looks like the sweets served on Lloyd-Triestino liners and is, I should imagine, equally unpalatable. It was now taken inside and placed on a table in front of the altar, immediately in front of the central figure of Guru Rimpoche. Later on, bowls of water and several lighted lamps were put down in front of it, and a jar of incense was lighted at one side.

There was the usual periodic chanting, like bees swarming, alternating with the usual bursts of music, and the actual ceremony did not appear to be different from that of the 21st, although to the initiated the order of the service was doubtless completely different.

About midday a small table was brought out and placed on the grass in front of the monastery. A bowl of *sher-kem*, the special ceremonial *chi* with maize and other grain floating in it, was placed on this, together with a large brass tray containing a number of small *tormas*. A young novice now came and stood by the table, took up one of the *tormas* in a spoon, and dipped it in the mixture. Having done this he held the spoon out at arm's length until there was what I can only describe as a musical orgasm inside the building, when he threw it from him with a shout of *loch!* whereupon

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●796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but [788] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of [535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

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After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

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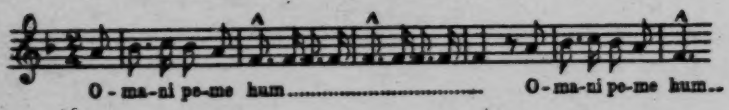

ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*
721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

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Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

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Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

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law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 15

Return to Civilisation

24th May:

SEVERAL Lamas spent the night in the monastery so as 796
to be ready for the *Boom Kor* ceremony, which starts at dawn to-morrow. The *Boom Kor* consists in carrying the sacred books, together with a small image of Guru Rimpoche, all round the village. In Jongu this is done once a year, but in other parts of Sikkim twice; its purpose is to keep away sickness, and it may be compared with the old English custom of Beating the Bounds.

Banging of drums and trumpet-playing started punctually 796
at four a.m., after which there was no more sleep for me, and 778
continued at intervals until the procession formed up at about half-past seven and started to move off. Each book was wrapped in yellow silk and carried by a woman, every household in the village being thus represented. The image of Guru Rimpoche was carried by a Lama on a small cushion of yellow, white and blue cloth: another Lama carried a large bell-like contraption, made of the same materials, on a long pole. This represented the god's umbrella. Yet another priest carried a small pot of holy water: this also was adorned with a "ballet skirt" of yellow, white and blue.

The procession went via Ongden's house, and the upper 796
part of the village to Tingkep's house, where the first halt was made and refreshment served. We arrived there at about eight-thirty to find the reading in full swing. No one seemed to be in charge, and each Lama seemed to be reading more or less on his own; but it was obvious that many of them could not read and were merely repeating by heart such bits of the scriptures as they happened to know.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all [576] the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As [788] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani- [788] ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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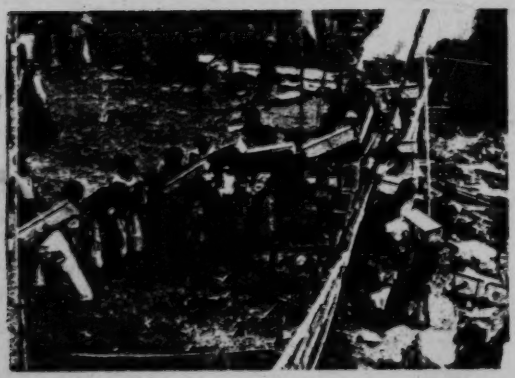
The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

[346 415 855]

[779 482]



The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p. 290]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●796
291

The return of the *Boom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.

[778
779]

Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.

[FACING p.291]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

●796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind [522] were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

[832 One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had [522] several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

800 All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ôngge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18] T L 171

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bŏn, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now. L 177 771 796

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace". L 796 778

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there L 796

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with ea[illegible]nd braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
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177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*" and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
●796 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
796 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
778 The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
778 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bön religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
775 possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*.

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bón terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bón priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28]

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bón flowers" is mentioned in Bón scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bón origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Analyst]

5:Nebeaky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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rum by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

As in the first rite, the number nine plays an important part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *looh lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yeu*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yeu*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *looh lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yeu*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yeu* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

(5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

(6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child, a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu, should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[21]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube*, *Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[22], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud*- demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

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10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

751 776 [171]

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

755 778 171

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 78. – Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950) 1951
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755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive descrip-
171 tion of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40]
we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of
the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon
its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about
the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite
also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is
regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
778 all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough,
coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with
pong sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed
into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger
image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure
of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's
bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols
of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron,
tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various
crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows
and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in
Himalayan Village (p. 352). The four red images of riders
[776 seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the
171] *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these super-
natural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red
thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of
the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[776]
796 If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
776 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
778 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
[see cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyse]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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described,[12] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 28-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1912,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

Das S. Ch. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

Schlagintweit, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet*, *Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
[431 by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
● [796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named: amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.

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opinion that Rum has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bu-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquite and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god."

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."[53] The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Gorer, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Gorer considers It-bo-mo to be female,[54] but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dän-si Bong-thing from Ka-far says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pum-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest

53. op. cit. p. 237.
54. op. cit. p. 238.

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793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-hiyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

● 796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited [535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. 796
These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and [778
chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual 782]
offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." [776]
"Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to [535]
dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue [781]
with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes 793
place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient 753
are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the 787
case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each [782]
day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a [791]
Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the 793
Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initia- 796
tion. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the 782
house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf 778
of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
796 the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal
[782 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
787] the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
[783 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
776] Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

793 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
[778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
293 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
534] activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the necklace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering; then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman, Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[59] (fig. 19.)

(h) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

We had the opportunity of being present at and observing the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

59. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will [761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[62c] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

● 796 782 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who [789] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] 62c go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gün do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ka tsäd ga la a gün lo tang gäm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amäx sa sut de dön ma gön
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang sa sut ma gön
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nöng lo lek dö tsäd ga abu amu lin ma gön chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe pö lad chiang gam anam anom aköb asom
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

nyom li ma top sag ni rum sa sag ni tag nam che lat nom
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[63]

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

63. Report from Kalimpong.

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been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pongrum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[64]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

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renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection. 776 [782]

The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 782

The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231 241]

Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

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796 782 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-faat to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, [241 776] wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share [841] this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse [786 833 171] between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or [362] a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must [515] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice.

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the Myths and the Ritual of the Rong

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The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyō, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dōn-dyō-chi-log, who is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

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72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 348.

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273 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-xyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious 273 effects : for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 353.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral 273 796 estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples.

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the [171] Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods...The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs....From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead....Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known 796 to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make 782 his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the 773 ngo-yong....

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 169 sq.

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796 782 [78] And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offering."[78]

[776 273] Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[78]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[78a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

796 782 171 Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

78. Stocks, op. cit. p. 288.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
78a. op. cit. p. 178.

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Jensen has reported, it is likewise evident, that they occurred as a repetition of that first killing, from which new life was engendered.

Thus it is clear then, that the slaughtering of cattle which Zarathustra again and again condemned, was the imitating and repeating of the indeed cruel, but—blessed killing of the original bull.

And in the closest connection with this, Zarathustra condemned in the same place the Haoma sacrifice, although, it is true he does not mention the name Haoma, but uses instead, an old unmistakable title of the Haoma.

This simultaneous mentioning of the Haoma endorses my opinion that with the words, 'the bull must be killed,' the sacrifice of the bull in the Mitra cult and its cosmic meaning are alluded to." This bull is said to be identical with Haoma.[77]

Very correctly does Lommel lay emphasis on the drawing of ethnological and prehistorical parallels for the explanation of the ritual. Our case is specially instructive for such an interpretation. The beliefs of the Rong and their rites prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the cult of the intoxicating drink and the cult of the bull are not identical, but are two altogether independent cults, and moreover that they are not the imitation of the original offering of the deity itself. Among the oldest ethnological tribes this mystification is not to be found ; but it is certainly so among the younger peoples especially among those with the peculiar mystery-religion. Others believe that the intoxicating Haoma has been supplanted by the milk-haoma which links with an old milk-mystery. The Mithra religion is Apolonic, sober, formalistic ; the Iranian Gatha-religion on the contrary, is Dionysiac, and is familiar with the Haoma delirium, with ecstacies, trances, and the wandering of souls in a state of trance.

Among the Indo-Iranians the Soma-Haoma sacrifice was performed in spring time for all the gods.[78] We have pointed out that exactly the same thing happens in the case of the Rong. The Rong-thing and the Mun, by partaking of

77. H. Lommel, Mithra und das Stieropfer, in Paideuma, Bd. III, H. 6/7, Juni 1948, p. 216 sq., p. 212.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 440 sq.

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796 782 171 Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

278 A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyö, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

273 171 The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 62, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.
82. X, 34. 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

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lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782
offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773
oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."[96] Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."[97] This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.[98]

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796
goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782
thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171
these priests.[99] But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231
of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."[100] The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796
ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782
Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171
during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.
97. op. cit. p. 356.
98. Cfr. above p. 77.
99. Cfr. p. 58 sq.
100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

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Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow. These sacrifices are common among the different Naga tribes.[101] Lepchas, who during the war came to these parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tedencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11·1·8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse ; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god, Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. C. R. Stoner, The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1950, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[103] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult. [776]

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796 Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782 The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171 the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793 such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

103. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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796 782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples 771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a 793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were 824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the 825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even 222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will 261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water [273] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, 252 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like 262 rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

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the Lepchas' ethics and attitudes which go to make a culture are founded on a community of equal citizens; divorced from such a community the Lepcha culture is meaningless. To some extent the Lepchas have adapted themselves to the changed conditions, accepting the way of life and language of their neighbours. But compared with the Nepali and Plains Indians they are wasteful agriculturists and they have a relatively high standard of living; despite some legal protection—the Lepcha cannot be dispossessed of his last five acres of land—it seems as though they must disappear fairly rapidly, either through want or through absorption. In India a certain amount of intermarriage goes on between Lepchas and Nepali; the Lepcha woman is esteemed for her physical appearance and her mild and yielding character.

In the last census nearly all Lepchas are entered as Buddhists; a little over a thousand had been converted to Christianity. Despite the small numbers the Lepchas represent one of the most fruitful fields of missionary endeavour in Northern India; and the conversion of individuals to Christianity seems to have modified the converts' character far more profoundly than the earlier group conversion to Buddhism. The Christians with whom I came in contact exhibited a strong sense of individual sin (an attitude lamaism has been unable to implant) and excessive prudery, with which was coupled a tendency to snigger at excretory functions.

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In an endeavour to gain converts the Baptist mission went to the length of translating and printing in the artificial Lepcha script three books of the New Testament. This seems to have been a work of almost complete supererogation, for the Lepcha script, never widely known, has now completely fallen into disuse; in order to read the scriptures Lepchas have to learn a new, and otherwise completely useless, alphabet; most of them are far more familiar with Nepali.

The Lepcha alphabet was invented at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century by King Cha-dor of Sikkim. According to Albert Grünwedel the Lepcha alphabet is derived from a form of the Tibetan U-med alphabet.[3] Some sort

[3] This resemblance is not very obvious to the lay eye; out of the 56 Lepcha characters 18 have no parallel in the U-med alphabet, and, of the 38 signs common to both, over half have very different forms.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter, Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191
Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these 197]
were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534
earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

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114 horribly familiar strains of "Abide with me," slightly out of
124 tune, issuing from the house next door in which he and the servants lived. I never made any effort to restrain him, for which I hope to receive due credit in any future existence which may be my lot.

Sukra Sing was what in India is technically known as a "compounder," which means that he had worked in a hospital for some months, knew a certain amount (in his case a dangerous amount) of simple doctoring and first-aid methods, and was authorised to "compound," or make up medicines to prescription, without, however, being responsible if he inadvertently confused aconite with aqua. He [797] was also under training as a missionary and was working under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries are rightly interested less in obtaining "scalps" than in improving the people's condition, the only possible excuse, in my opinion, for missionary work amongst primitive peoples. I shall have more to say about missionary activities later on in this book; but in the meantime I cannot help thinking that Sukra Sing will now go out into the field with considerably more tolerance for his "uncivilised" Lepcha brethren than would otherwise have been the case. He was fortunately not musical, but showed signs towards the end of our stay of a wakening interest in the flute. Dhawa, however, preferred to play solo.

* * * * *

114 We left Gangtok without any very clear idea of our exact
636 destination. His Highness had suggested Jongu as being the most suitable place in which to commence our studies; and so to Jongu we set off. No one was quite sure of the exact position of this place; nor was the Ordnance Survey map helpful, for it omitted all trace of this, to us at least, important place. On arrival at Mangen, however, where we were to leave the main trade route through Sikkim, the mystery was solved, for it there transpired that Jongu was not a village but a district; a district, moreover, which stretched from roughly

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CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a [144 few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants 197] of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha 797 oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

introduced into the country about the middle of the seven- 173
teenth century by Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo, the patron saint of 797
Sikkim.

Lha-Tsun is so intimately connected with the local form 175
of Lamaism, figures so frequently in the strange hotch-potch of fact and fiction that passes for history, that it is essential to give some details of his life, so far as they are known.

Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo is a Tibetan title meaning "The great reverend god." His ordinary religious name is Kun-zan num-gye, or "The entirely victorious essence of goodness"; but he is also known by the title of Lha-tsun num kha Jig-may, or "the reverend god who fears not the sky." This is with reference to his alleged power of flying. He has yet another name, being sometimes referred to as Kusho Dsog-ch'en Ch'em-bo, or "The great and honourable Dsog-ch'en," the latter part of which name means literally "The great end," this being the technical name for the particular system of mysticism practised by the Nin-ma-pa sect, of which he was a member. Kusho means merely "the honourable," and is the title by which all persons of position are addressed in Tibet.

He was born in the fire-bird year of the tenth of the sixty-year cycles, corresponding to A.D. 1595, in the district of Kongbu, in south-eastern Tibet. Having spent many years in various monasteries and in travelling through Tibet and Sikkim, he eventually arrived in Lhasa in 1648, where he obtained such repute by his learning that he attracted the favourable notice of one Nag-wan, the greatest of the Grand Lamas, who shortly afterwards became the first of the so-called Dalai Lamas. Indeed, it is said that it was mainly through the special instructions given by Lha-tsun to the Grand Lama that the latter was so favourably treated by the Emperor of China and confirmed in the temporal rule of Tibet.

The detailed account of the saint's meeting with Nag-wan is worth citing as an example of the curious blend of the crude and the marvellous, of which most of these indigenous narratives are composed.

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755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however,
[787] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,
					1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847
are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

another; one, moreover, the tenets of which are not yet sufficiently practised in our own country. But there can be nothing but praise for the work done by the Church of Scotland among the Lepchas and others in the Kalimpong and adjacent districts, where, owing to the inspired leadership of Dr. Graham, whose ideas are still generations ahead of the average orthodox missionary, there has been no destruction but only a building up and strengthening of what was already in existence. In the Kalimpong hills the missionaries attach most importance to raising the standards of health and living, and in most cases conversion only takes place at the personal request of the individual concerned, for it is realised that the good life is not necessarily the prerogative of Christians. As a matter of fact the majority of the Christians in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts are Lepchas; not, I think, because there is less difference between Buddhism and Christianity, and the latter and Hinduism, but because the Lepchas have no caste. It is, for instance, possible for one member of a Lepcha family to become a Christian without his relations with the rest of the family becoming in any way estranged, whereas the Nepali, to take the most obvious other example, who is a Hindu, becomes completely outcasted on conversion and can no longer even eat with his family.

But I am not suggesting that you should permit Christian missionaries to work in Jongu. I do think, however, that you might take a leaf out of their book. What the people require is some simple education adapted to their special needs, and a really sympathetic doctor, someone who, apart from the purely professional side of his work, is also interested in general social problems. In a country like Sikkim, which has a considerable aristocracy of its own, it should surely be possible to interest a few young men and women of the upper classes in your Lepchas, and induce them to devote some part of their lives to improving these people's condition. As an example of what I mean I need only instance the admirable example of Your Highness's own sister and brother-in-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking
[787 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of
775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should
[782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a
[797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited
[535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first
[778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet
782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been 796 801 previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green [373] tea-leaves and ghee. Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

716 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 384] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*" and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*. This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form, as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction. The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bón religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and especially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag pó*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

rum by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

As in the first rite,[1] the number nine plays an important part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 72. - Analyst]

796 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

796 This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned
776 before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an
177 illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two
776 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child,
787 a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu,
778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical
171 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect
801 a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the
778 Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an 755
image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This 801
effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted
pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exor- 778
cising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces [824]
of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—
one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone [831]
tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to [283]
the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and 755
held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937,1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

described,[2] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bón elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bón religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

DAS S. CH. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

SCHLAGINTWEIT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet, Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

153 Numbers are practically meaningless to them and
802 numerical concepts play a very small rôle; in any question demanding numbers they will nearly always give in answer three or four alternatives. In some situations this is almost ludicrous; except for one or two lamas nobody knows his own age or even that of his youngest children in years; they all know the year they were born and what year they are now in, but if a child was born in Dog year they would be quite unable to work out its age today (1937 was Ox year and the child would be four) and they might just as well say that the child was two or eight. More than that, if you asked a person how many people were living in his house he would almost certainly get the number wrong; he could naturally recite immediately the names or rather the kinship terms of the people in his house; but it does not cross his mind to tot up the number and it is a mental operation of which nearly all Lepchas are incapable. The Lepchas count by twenties and use their fingers for all calculations; they count with the thumb against the fingers, putting the thumb on the base of the little finger for one, the first joint for two, the second joint for three, the tip for four and then going down to the base of the next finger for five and so on. There used to be long consultations to try and work out in how many days a fixed date for a calendrical feast would arrive; and on one occasion everybody except one lama arrived a day late, and the Muns frequently made a mistake of a day or more for their special festivals. They are quite incapable of working out what money they should receive for their cardamum; they may know that they have ten maunds and that each maund is worth Rs. 12; but unless they use sticks or some other memory guide they have absolutely no idea of what the total should be. The Mandal has to keep in his head the taxes due from each household but he does this by remembering the words and not the figures.

153 The Lepchas do not dramatise; and they do not alter their pace of thought or action except in emergencies which for the reason that they demand such alteration are considered particularly unpleasant. My impression is that the Lepchas think much more slowly than either the Nepali or the Indians, but since my knowledge of both these races is slight this impression is of little value; they certainly think quicker than the ordinary Somerset farm labourer, though infinitely slower than a European town dweller. I got the impression that they talked quickly, but that I think was due to the fact that the language was an unfamiliar one, and that I was straining to catch every shade of meaning.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Work in the fields, whether sowing, weeding or harvesting, is nearly always done in large parties. These parties are made up partly of relations by blood or marriage, and partly by friends. Since the Lepchas trace relationship back nine generations on the father's side and at least four on the mother's there is a tendency for most villagers to have some relationship; I should guess that out of a dozen Lepchas of Lingthem taken by chance, a relationship chain could be established between eight of them. But this relationship is not necessary for field-helpers; in nearly all the lists I made there were a few people quite unrelated. 241 476 601

Help in the fields is always repaid with a similar amount of labour; for sowing and weeding the helpers are also always given a meal with meat. At harvesting a meal need not be given to people who volunteer their services, but must be given to those who are asked to help. At harvest payment is given in kind: forty to fifty pounds of rice to an adult worker, a big basket of millet or maize, thirty to forty pounds of buckwheat. Children are given proportionately less. The first person to harvest his dry rice, and the last to harvest the wet, must make a small present of the grain to all the other householders. Because cardamum is a money-producing and not a food-producing crop help with it is paid for in money; a rupee a head is given for work in the fields and Rs. 3/– for carrying a maund[5] to market. 241 476 [465]

iv

The most general food of the Lepchas is rice. This is prepared in four main ways; boiled whole after husking in water and eaten with meat or vegetables or other seasoning; boiled whole in milk; 'puffed', or ground fine and made into a pudding. This ground-rice pudding is often given to children. Wheat and maize may be eaten in the same way if there is no rice, but they are not liked. Buckwheat is ground and mixed with water and baked on the 252 262

[5] The *maund*, which is divided into 40 *seers* is the current measure of weight in India. A maund is meant to represent the load one man can lift, and its equivalent in European measure depends partly on *what* is measured, and partly on *where* it is measured. (Similar confusion can be found in various English measures of agricultural produce such as a bushel, or a truss.) On the Indian railways a maund is equated to 80 lbs., which makes the seer 2 lbs. The Lepchas have their own measures according to the size of the basket used. Since all these measures are very rough I have generally given an approximate equivalent in lbs. avoirdupois. [804]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

much a prayer is said (usually by an experienced layman) after each sowing. It is arguable that more intensive cultivation would not result in a bigger yield per hour of work; and the continuous change of ground, only possible with a light population, prevents erosion and soil exhaustion. The accompanying table shows schematically the work of the Lepcha agricultural year.

LEPCHA AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR
(for the Talung valley)

(*Note*: The Tibetan year begins in February, and the first of the Tibetan month falls on about the tenth of the English. Consequently 'February', e.g. should be interpreted as 'February 10th to March 10th.')

TANGBU (February).	Clear the ground and finish sowing buckwheat. This and the two preceding months are the period of intense cold when poor old people may die for lack of warmth.
NIBU (March)	Finish clearing ground and sow dry paddy in temporary fields; sow maize and early millet in valley. Weed cardamum in flower and strike new plants. This and the following month is the time of rain and hail-storms.
SUMGU (April)	Harvest barley and wheat. Clear ground for main-crop millet. Weed cardamum again round new-formed fruit.
ZIBU (May)	Harvest buckwheat. Sow maincrop millet. Sow maize in 'garden' burning the wheat straw for fertilising. This and the three following months are the period of constant rain and heat. Head-coverings are necessary.
NAPU (June)	Plant wet rice. Weed dry rice. This is the leanest month when people may go hungry. In this and the following month is the greatest infantile mortality, through diarrhoea and dysentery.
TIKPU (July)	Harvest earliest millets in valley. Weed maincrop millet.
DENGBU (August)	Harvest earliest variety of wet rice. Make a shed to dry cardamum fruit. Make a small sowing of buckwheat for seed.
GEBU (September)	Harvest dry rice. The women start harvesting the millet, the men the cardamum. This and the two following months are relatively dry.
GOOBU (October)	Cardamum picking continues. Wet rice is harvested. Barley, wheat and onions are sown in the 'garden'.
CHOOPU (November)	The seed-buckwheat is harvested. Cardamum is sold. This and the next two months are the prosperous period, the time of little work and much feasting, of shopping and trading expeditions. Most marriages are celebrated now.
CHUCHIKPU (December)	Taxes are paid. The harvested temporary fields must be made ready for buckwheat.
CHUNIPU (January).	The big sowing of buckwheat.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

787 fourth, twelve-year cycle to discover what is foretold for the next twelve years, and, in the event of illnesses or misfortunes being threatened, to perform the indicated apotropaic ceremonies. These consultations are repeated every twelve years. The final horoscope is cast immediately after death; this shows the cause of death, the future state of the man's soul and his next reincarnation, the most propitious mode of disposing of the body, the direction in which the body should be carried and the people who should handle it, and also what ceremonies should be performed to prevent the death-causing devil from attacking further members of the household, or, if the devil has gone elsewhere, into whose house the devil has entered.[9]

Though entirely mechanical the casting of horoscopes is an elaborate and difficult business which entails the collating and interpreting of a great number of cross-references. In Lingthem the only lamas who know how to do so are the two Dorjé Lapoon and Tafoor, and in nearly all cases it is Tafoor who is consulted.

787 Years are reckoned by four different and independent cycles: the most important, and the only one laymen know of is the twelve-year 805 'animal cycle'; next in importance comes the ten-year 'element' cycle; the importance of these two reside in the fact that a person is considered to possess the qualities of the animal and element of his year, and in horoscope conjunctions these qualities are of the greatest importance.[10] There are also two independent nine-year cycles founded on different magic squares (*mariwã and parrko*) so that, calculating by the year alone there are 9,720 different combinations. Besides the year calculations there are also calculations for the hour (of birth or death), the time (morning, midday, evening, etc.), the day, the month, the stars, the birth number, and so on. Altogether there are between ten and sixteen cross-references, depending on the elaboration of the horoscope, which can be made to check, counter-check and modify one another. Any apparent contradictions arising from the various modes of calculation are resolved by being explained as contingent.

[9] Complete horoscopes for birth, marriage and death will be found in Appendix III.

[10] The animal cycle is Rat, Ox, Tiger, Eagle, 'Thunder-bird', Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Fowl, Dog, Pig. The element cycle (each element lasts two solar years) is Fire, Earth, Iron, Water, Wood. 1937 was Ox year and the second Fire year; 1938 Tiger year and the first Earth year.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
● 805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. Her husband, however,
[787] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,

1935 and so on.

* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805 combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [17] a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 751 Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755 compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice 755
added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means 782
"the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the [805]
year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the
Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of [776]
the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-
mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat
were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable [793]
parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat,
as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make [432]
a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten im-
mediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy
expenditure for the family ; often many sacrifices are offered
for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin
of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic 792
monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive
out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal 793
name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described
a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the 796
ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements 782
for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the
following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five [778
deities namely : Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded 776]
as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb,
the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu.
There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers con-
taining chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat,
and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by
her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-
mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses
in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years
old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing
A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an
apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her [293]
Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer
wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of
the prayers used in her sacrifice.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 have a few pairs. All goats are fed on salt, and billy goats are also given maize. Kids, and other young animals, are never killed for food.

Pigs also are raised for eating and sacrifice, but their meat is more popular and a large number are kept. They are the only animals which are generally killed for domestic eating. They are fed on the remains of *chi* after the grain has been three times soused. It is not rare for pigs and piglets to get quite drunk on this diet; there is quite a heavy mortality among them, and also occasionally among goats, who take the food by mistake, through their falling down dead drunk. The pig would appear to be a variety of the Himalayan wild pig; it is a relatively thin black animal, covered with bristles. All boars are castrated at the age of three or four months, by which time, it is said, they will have been old enough to cover the sow once. There are two reasons for thus castrating the boars; if it is not done it is said they would become savage and wander away into the forest. But there is a greater danger than [838] this; if a man should happen to eat the flesh of an uncastrated pig he would thereupon commit sodomy. This is an example of the ●811 notion of *tamtoom*, an extremely important major Lepcha idea; if two events are believed to be inevitably connected, though the actual causation of the second by the first is not obvious, the second event is said to be the *tamtoom* of the first. With our logical attitude to the external world we have no proper parallel to this notion; the nearest approach would be if our common superstitions were believed to be specific and ineluctable. If for example walking under a ladder were believed to produce, say, a financial loss, this loss would be the *tamtoom* of walking under a ladder. The two acts need not necessarily be performed by or happen to the same person; when pre-natal precautions and body-marks are discussed, it will be seen that the child often suffers the *tamtoom* of his parents' actions.

838 Sodomy is strongly anti-social—it is called *nam-toak*, an act producing a year of disaster, the term which is also applied to incest—and an extremely embarrassing subject, one of the very few people don't like discussing. There is one man in the village, Takneum *youmi*, who has twice sodomised people when he was drunk and the victim asleep. In the second case, which occurred recently, the victim was old Lharibu Chujen, himself a grandfather; [684] he was not angry at the indignity offered and did not claim the recompense of a pig and five rupees and ceremonial cleansing by a Mun to which he was entitled.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
● [813] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders; † rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
passion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and nomenclature extend to beasts, birds, to insects, and to everything around them, animate and inanimate. The trees and the flowers, and the birds, and the insects have heretofore been their friends and companions. But now, this simple knowledge, this beautiful language, this once happy people are fast dying out. The Lepchas have left their woods and innocence and have fallen into sin and misery, and is there no one that will help them, no one that will save them?" MAINWARING. 1876.

But the forest is still there: the good Colonel forgot the effects of that 137 inches of rain a year!

The Secretary of State for India, when Governor of Bengal, visits the Lepchas.

"We were entering a country reserved for the Lepchas, a stumpy, flat-faced people with sallow complexions and matted black hair, just such gnomes as one would look for in the sombre depths of an enchanted forest. And their impersonation of the part was perfect when, as not infrequently happened, they emerged unexpectedly from the forest armed with bows and arrows. And as if this was not enough, the attendants thoughtfully detailed by His Highness the Maharaja to accompany us, were garbed in a manner one would look for in no one but a woodland elf."

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY
(now Marquess of Zetland), 1923.

A modern opinion by one who has worked among the Lepchas for fifty years.

"You ask me what I think of the Lepchas as compared with the other hill peoples—the Tibetans and the Nepalese. As I have told you, they appeal to me more than do the others. I'll give you a few instances of individuals and groups. I am, of course, conscious that one is apt to be prejudiced in favour of people we personally like, and to forget that among all races there are outstanding individuals who are exceptions to the general rule; but I'll do my best to be judicious.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [502]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412]
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821 ●
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

821 sudden burst of thunder, not an unusual occurrence in
831 Lingtem. This would at first sight appear to have no connection with the subject of sex; but actually it has. It is considered at all times dangerous to laugh when there is thunder about, but this is the story Karma told me:

821 "Once, when I was a small boy, I went on a visit to Gangtok. I had been down to the bazaar and was sitting talking to some Nepalis in the shop of a betel-nut seller. There was a small lizard running up and down the wall at the time and one of the men laughed and spat a jet of red *pan* juice at it. It remained without moving, merely blinking its eyes in the peculiar quick manner that lizards have: it then ate some of the spittle. Immediately after it suddenly grew quite dark and still; and then there was a terrific crash of thunder followed by the most vivid streak of lightning I have ever seen. We were all thrown to the ground, and several of the men were so badly injured that they had to be taken to hospital; but I myself was only a little dazed. There is no doubt that the lizard caused this sudden burst of thunder and called it down on the men as a punishment for laughing at it.

821 "Incidentally, there are certain men who involuntarily
831 cause sudden thunder if anyone laughs on beholding their private parts. There are not many such; and in fact there is no one living in Lingtem at the moment who possesses this peculiar quality.

"I well remember when the present monastery was being built: there was a boy from a neighbouring village who was helping to carry up stones from the river. Babu was his name. The work was very heavy, and since it was a hot and sultry day the men had discarded most of their clothing. On the way up the hill Babu's trousers slipped down, so that his penis was exposed. All the women started to laugh and to make remarks about his person. Almost at once the sky grew dark and then there was a terrific burst of thunder, followed by lightning. Babu ran off towards Jiroong's house, which was nearby. As he did so we saw the lightning appear

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing. [821] [753]

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

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I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000
inacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as
for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of
heir way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to
what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114
he headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He
old us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the
lisadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building.
Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right
providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where
he images are kept; so we decided to move in straight
away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793
Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though
uch places can in no way be compared with the religious
nstitutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of
gompas are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and
most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is,
as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and
traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common
between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346
two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the
ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the
broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822]
it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main
hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778]
altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine
one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first
introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of
the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in
order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied
at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373
away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782]
either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-
light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
796 and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
776 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
778 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
778 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bön religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and espe-
822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
775 possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

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778

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 64
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank 823
copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which [751
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots 824]
of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to
be rubbed over the body.

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of a deeper yellow-green where the cardamum grows. Scattered here and there among the prevailing greens may be seen the glow of a fruit-tree in flower, and nearby the low thatched roof of a house, barely distinguishable until you are close upon it. The paths are the faintest tracks, invisible until you come upon them; there is no main road, nothing to guide your way; except that there are usually more stones—for the bigger stones will have been removed from the neighbouring fields and piled on the path to make drier walking in the wet weather—there is little to indicate what is path and what merely rough ground. Overtowering and dwarfing all the works of man are the enormous ramparts of the gleaming snows, cutting short a quarter of the horizon in almost every direction. You can see that the land is in part cultivated and inhabited, but the part seems insignificant; in the battle between man and nature, nature seems everywhere the winner.

That is the landscape for the European; for the Lepcha not a single feature is the same. Except when they refer to them as the habitations of the high Gods, the Lepchas do not remember the mountains; they do not lift up their eyes, they look down on the ground. Every piece of land is meaningful for them, for every piece, unless it be the home of a supernatural, is, has been, or will be cultivated. They think and speak of their country as a poor country, demanding disproportionate labour for the food they require for themselves and their families. For them the land is not a friend; it is a material; and when they look at it they see therein the work and sweat they have fed it with all their lives. Every piece of land, every step they take, reminds them of the past and the present, of their own work and struggles, and those of their neighbours; the houses and fences they have helped to build, the land they have helped to clear and weed and harvest, the places where they have played as children, or, later, met for amorous encounter. They see too the cliffs and rocks and lonely trees where dwell the devils who menace and destroy their otherwise peaceful and happy existence; these visible signs remind them of those evil forces—disease and death, blight and famine, childlessness and enmity and quarrelling—that mar a life which, though hard enough, would otherwise be easy and friendly, full of health and happiness. The Lepchas do not see the landscape; they see the records of their lives, and of the lives of their ancestors, and of the lives to come of their children.

[p. 82 is blank]

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123 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron [491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with 768] votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter 823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

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888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, 137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

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751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

● 823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

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The place selected for the ceremony was in a small 796
clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchin- 823 ●
junga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more 782
venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border 823
of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

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823 and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

796 The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and con-
778 structed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

796 When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
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764
and then somebody of those present leaves the room immediately to 775
search at the spot now indicated; he mostly returns within a short 787
time with the missing objects.

While the family property is being inherited according to the old 768
Lepcha law, the personal belongings of the dead are distributed among 428
his closer relatives. This is usually carried out by the *Mŭn*, while still 578
possessed by the *Mŭk nyam*. But not always is this way of dividing the heritage regarded as just, and it frequently leads to quarrels.

At the end of this ceremony, a food offering is made to the dead. 764
A cup with some water is handed to the *Mŭn*,—who still remains in the 775
trance —and she sprinkles some of the water on all the food which had been placed in front of her, thus making it "eatable for the deceased". Then all the members of the family step forward one by one and present a dish with food to the spirit and burn also some incense, together with traces of food, and a container filled with Lepcha beer is given to the *Mŭn* to drink. Shortly after this offering the *Mŭk nyam* leaves the body of the *Mŭn*, who soon returns to full consciousness, and then removes the rope from her left hand. Some of the Lepchas claim, that when the *Mŭn* begins to complain of pain—usually in a part of her body, corresponding to those limbs and organs of the deceased, which had been affected by the deadly illness or accident —it has to be regarded as a reliable sign, that the *Mŭk nyam* is about to leave the medium.

After a short interval, the *Mŭn* ties again the rope to her left hand 764
and goes into a light trance, in order to guide the spirit of the dead to 775
the other world. On the way to the *Rŭm lyang*, an obstacle called *Lep*, which is imagined to be like a tremendous waterfall or a deep precipice, has to be crossed by the *Mŭk nyam* with the assistance of the *Mŭn*. Having overcome this barrier, the spirit is met by *The kung tek*,[16] the first *Bong thing*, and his wife *Ne kung ngal*, the first *Mŭn*. They will enumerate to the deceased the line of his ancestors, mentioning on the seventh place the name of the mountain, with which his clan believes itself to be connected,[17] and then they accompany the spirit, to meet *Fă gróng thing* and *Nă zóng nyo*, the ancestors of the Lepchas. In the *Rŭm lyang* the spirits of all, who had died in more recent times, dwell in the form of shadows, while those who died soon after the world had been created, reside here in their bodily form, ready to return to the world should its inhabitants die out.

There are different accounts to be found among the various 775
clans of the Lepchas regarding the way in which the *Mŭk nyam* is 823
supposed to reach the *Rŭm lyang*. The Chronicles of the Maharajas of Sikkim mention a belief of the Sengdenmos, that the spirit goes to

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
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775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the ● 823 spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Namphagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial. At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* in order to chase away all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar fong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people, and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral 766 rites for a *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way. Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn* is not cremated, but mostly buried according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fă gróng thing* is placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets. Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rŭm lyang*"—dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane, the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various foodstuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor, as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and [756] right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pŏ ting*),[14] as used by the sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Mŭh nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mŭn* or *Bong thing* is conducted to the *Rŭm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

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horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [787]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824] ●
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol [831]
is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

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and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them.

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing.

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum.

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop.

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342 592 Mrs. Katel' was both unhappy and unpopular in her husband's community, and ran away for refuge to the Mandal who had brought her up. Her husband Katel followed her, and asked the Mandal's permission to settle in Lingthem; this was given and he was provided with land on which to build a house and which he could clear for cultivation. During the period when these four houses were built an equal number fell into decay either through family lines dying out, or through households amalgamating. Thus Tobgé, a young married man, all of whose family had died, had abandoned his house to go and live with Jiroong, who was his father's youngest brother.

According to the oldest inhabitants the number of houses increased very greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ninety-year-old Serving, who was almost in his dotage, said that when he was a child there were only four houses in Lingthem; and Kahlyeu, born in 1860, says that in his childhood there were about twelve households. Kahlyeu ascribes the increase to the fact that in those days families were larger and split up as the sons grew older; but it seems probable that the indirect pacification after 1860 made possible a considerable increase in the number of permanently settled inhabitants.

173 According to Kahlyeu—and the tradition is supported by others—until about the beginning of the seventeenth century the Lepchas were entirely nomadic, only building temporary mud huts, and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and the wild plants, of which the Lepchas have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every tree and plant. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say in the first half of the eighteenth

[824]

[551] * Some objection may be taken to my referring to married women as Mrs. X. Among the Lepchas married women are never named, and there are three different methods of referring to them: mother of A, wife of B, or woman from C, that order representing the frequency of usage. Thus Mrs. Tafoor is usually called Chimpet-mu (mother of Chimpet, her eldest son), less often Tafoor-veu (wife of Tafoor), or Pamng-mu (woman from Pamng). 'Mother of A' seems to me unnecessarily confusing, and since, in nine cases out of ten, a married woman owes her presence in the community to the fact that she is married to her husband, I have found it most convenient consistently to refer to married women as 'wife of X', or, in the English form 'Mrs. X', since this term seems to me to approach nearest to the cultural reality.

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 778

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 614
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank 823
copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *run*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which [751
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots 824]
of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

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273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [824] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

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000 essential; according to the supernatural indicated the ceremony will be performed by a lama or Mun.

771 The following objects seen in dreams are lucky: gathering sand,
779 collecting wood, seeing a woman with a big goitre: they foretell a
756 good harvest; to put on new clothes or gather firewood or to have
787 stones thrown at you mean the acquisition of property. Solid
777 excreta indicate a good buckwheat harvest, liquid ones that the harvest will be destroyed by storms. To be covered with filth indicates coming wealth. To dream of climbing or going up hill is propitious. If you dream you are cut or are given silver it means that you will the next day be given a present of *chi*. The following objects are unlucky: a sick person lying down indicates a bad harvest: a tooth coming out means a relation will die, if from the right side of the mouth a paternal relation, if from the left a maternal; hair coming out or even combing hair also foretells death. A neighbour pounding rice foretells a death in his house. To dream of drinking foretells rain. A lake, swimming, or falling into water all foretell illness. A river foretells a message from the State authorities, agreeable if the water is clear, disagreeable if muddy. To dream that you are excreting in public means that your relations are slandering you. Being naked in a crowd foretells illness, as do dirty or ugly people. The setting sun foretells the death of kings. To dream of the dead foretells illness, to dream of a landslide, death, and also to dream of picking fungus. A dream of a red cloth or red flower means you will cut yourself, to dream of chicken's droppings means that some one is going to poison you. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

756 Specially ominous dreams are: to dream of a kite or of men
771 flying (this indicates the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and demands
779 a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of fire (this indicates illness and
787 also demands a ceremony by a Mun): to dream of a storm blowing into your house and lifting off the roof (this indicates that you are the object of malicious sorcery and lamas must perform ceremonies): to dream of going down hill carrying a load (this foretells illness; lamas and Mun can both avert it): to dream of a snake (this foretells danger and needs elaborate lamaist ceremonies); and so on. These specially ominous dreams are fortunately rare, for it would be considered dangerously rash to neglect the proper ceremonies. For less strongly ill-omened dreams it is permissible to make a [824] hole in a leaf of a special species of wild arum and spit through it; this will avert the danger.

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel

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sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
passion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

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and nomenclature extend to beasts, birds, to insects, and to everything around them, animate and inanimate. The trees and the flowers, and the birds, and the insects have heretofore been their friends and companions. But now, this simple knowledge, this beautiful language, this once happy people are fast dying out. The Lepchas have left their woods and innocence and have fallen into sin and misery, and is there no one that will help them, no one that will save them?" MAINWARING. 1876.

But the forest is still there: the good Colonel forgot the effects of that 137 inches of rain a year!

The Secretary of State for India, when Governor of Bengal, visits the Lepchas.

"We were entering a country reserved for the Lepchas, a stumpy, flat-faced people with sallow complexions and matted black hair, just such gnomes as one would look for in the sombre depths of an enchanted forest. And their impersonation of the part was perfect when, as not infrequently happened, they emerged unexpectedly from the forest armed with bows and arrows. And as if this was not enough, the attendants thoughtfully detailed by His Highness the Maharaja to accompany us, were garbed in a manner one would look for in no one but a woodland elf."

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY
(now Marquess of Zetland), 1923.

A modern opinion by one who has worked among the Lepchas for fifty years.

"You ask me what I think of the Lepchas as compared with the other hill peoples—the Tibetans and the Nepalese. As I have told you, they appeal to me more than do the others. I'll give you a few instances of individuals and groups. I am, of course, conscious that one is apt to be prejudiced in favour of people we personally like, and to forget that among all races there are outstanding individuals who are exceptions to the general rule; but I'll do my best to be judicious.

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concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776] the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751] does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164] arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

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796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824 386] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

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of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796
winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241]
been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [582]
second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824 ●
ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821]
clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412]
the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
[439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177] days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black-smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824 ●
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-
born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291

Karma.

142
291
531
415
824

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

For catching jungle fowl, hares and other small game, a spring bow (*ver sak*) is set in the following way. A short piece of wood, with a broad notch in its upper part, is stuck firmly into the ground and then another piece of wood, which has a notch loosely fitting into that of the first piece, is placed into it in a horizontal position. A bamboo shoot or a small tree is bent, a string attached to it and, lastly, a sling is made, which is led over the upper, horizontal arm of the previously described device. The bait is placed on the sling and by pulling at it, the horizontal arm slips out of the vertical piece and thus releases the trap. — The same kind of trap, only in a larger size, is used for catching deer.

Another kind of sling trap used for catching jungle fowl is the so-called *ma ló*. It consists of a row of slings, made of the hair of a horse-tail, which are suspended from a fixed horizontal beam.

A Lepcha dead-fall (*kóp*) for killing jungle fowl, is constructed as follows: A string is fastened to a tree and then led over a flat stone; the string ends in a short bamboo stick, to which a bait is fastened. Then another short string is bent into a loop and its two ends are firmly fastened to the ground at the bottom of the stone and the bamboo stick with the bait is then pulled through the loop, formed by the lower string, the tension of both strings holding the stone in a tilted position. A slight movement of the bamboo piece causes the upper sling to slip out of the loop and the stone thus drops on top of the animal.

Another kind of dead-fall, which has to be set on a jungle path, is the so-called *shil*. It consists of a heavy wooden beam, supported on one side by a lightly placed stick, which might be easily knocked down by an animal running along the path.

For catching birds, a small grill is made out of a few bamboo sticks, and is afterwards smeared with tarry birdlime (*a' yók*), obtained from a *Ficus* tree. The birdlime is usually kept ready for use in a small bamboo container (*po tek*). The grill, already smeared with bird lime, is known as *a' yók pün grim*; it is placed over

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the net and supporting it with a stick. Some corn is placed as 223
bait on the ground inside the net and the hunter then hides himself 286
in a nearby bush. Should some fowl enter the net, the hunter hits the stick supporting the flap with a stone, thus closing the trap, or he simply begins to shout; the fowl flies up, the net is detached from the branch and falls on top of the prey.

While most of the before-mentioned traps can be easily handled 224
by a single man, in some cases, especially in big game hunt, the cooperation of several hunters is necessary. Huge camouflaged pitfalls (*tüng hóng*), mostly with sharp spikes at the bottom — made of a small, but very hard kind of bamboo (*po yóng tsu*) — were [824] constructed for trapping elephants and rhinos. For catching the latter, a spot in the jungle had to be located first, where a rhino would habitually come to answer its call of nature. Lepcha hunters claim that the rhino then usually begins to walk backwards and easily falls into a pit.

To catch leopards or tigers alive, a heavy cage with a trap door was constructed; in this case, a living bait was used. Small cages with trap doors are sometimes placed in the fields, to catch monkeys who cause damage to the crops.

The hunting of wild pigs is often carried out by a group of hunters. At first, rows of huge bamboo spikes are erected under a cliff and a number of men, forming a beating line, try to chase the wild pigs towards the cliff, from where they eventually drop on the spikes set below.

Occasionally beating lines are formed to drive animals towards a line of archers. In the driving hunt, fire is never used as the Lepchas fear that a fire in the jungle might get easily out of control and become a danger to men and their property.

Fishing

A few among the Lepchas, mostly those whose dwellings lie close 226
to a mountain river, practise fishing, but as in hunting, fishing also

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an 755
image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This 801
effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted 778
pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces [824] ●
of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone [831]
tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to [283]
the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and 755
held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

716 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor [177] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord'[1]); the mouth-756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [153] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago[2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves ●[824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its [534] tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Pb-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hlo-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 482. The term *Yek* or *Yek-man* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tipel-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

[539]

En Ye!	
Ne-tan-chi Ron kap ñun non bin	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lil-non po-bong yit duk kuñ su	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tsum* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsum po-mig duk kuñ su pa-s'or ron	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk hung su Ron kap yum yoñ s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

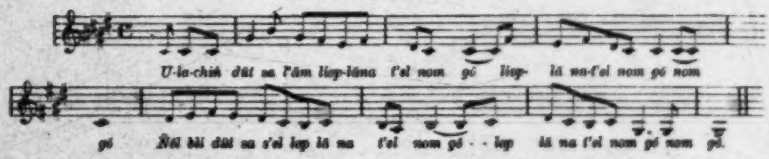
The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the [574] others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing [273] behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUÑ DÜT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]



U-la duk düt su-t'ám lip-lá na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñál-bli düt su-s'el , , , ,	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Soñ la lum s'u fat-tuñ , , , ,	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-for ki-tum nuñ nbli lip-lá diñ mit nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tat-hat su-s'el , , , , ,	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tuk-gum diñ-mit nom , , , , ,	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'at ta-bil-la lip-lá na-t'iel nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mok fo s'at nuñ nbu , , , ,	Like a sorrowing *S'uñ* bird.
Sik la ma run na mo , , , ,	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Loñ la ma run na mo , , , ,	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ne tak-ook buk po ma t'ám na-gut	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-che-ne* yam [7])
Kyoñ-rin-lo let duk ñ-tim-bu lit non-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyoñ-rin-lo* heart.

[824] [231] [415]

[1]) *Pa-shor* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Pu*" or „*Pou*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) Thin beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poñ-t'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poñ-hin*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *hip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñál-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *lum-s'u*.

[7]) *Tak-ook-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour. [222]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dö god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miä song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [60]

60. sa her rum bu gun dö rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dö god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gom shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pö blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyär pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dzän dong däm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzän dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu däm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzän dong hiu däm dong hiu o! ön sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miä song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 782 illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples 771 prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a 793 kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

173 According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were 824 their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the 825 animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even 222 today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will 261 procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water [272] for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, 252 and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like 262 rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar ') 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825 ●
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [787]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ro*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

825 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus
171 it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

* * * * *

796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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755 a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

755 171 The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The [825] Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164- goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres 787] are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776, sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits 772] of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the 773
Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the
ptso was going through the forest when he came on what he
thought was a dead bear ; but really this bear was an incar- [776]
nation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of
hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his
incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate
part of it ; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said,
'You have eaten part of my body ; henceforward you and your
children must serve me and worship me and make offerings
to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat
all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason
why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, [262]
whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these
legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing,
gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food
and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game,
and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the 776
god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on 224
whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the 825
slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are
looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following
story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who
hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this
theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the [538]
foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly
I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull
was asleep ; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified
me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as
if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting
god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds.
The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing
drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We with-
drew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters 224
call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They 136
say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niu-big in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

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small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tschangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear.

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu.

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[67] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[68]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

67. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 132 sq.
68. R. C. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. E. Livesey, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 199 sq., W. S. Thom, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 106 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 222, seq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 134 sq.

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136 [71] Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 232] The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 262 825 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bön-män-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against [782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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 796 782 171 [776]

Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[102] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult.

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most [825] intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796 Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 782 The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171 the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793 such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

102. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 462.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-ahi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ¾ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ½ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched pin in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 pop-eyes or folded eyelids are ugly; so are dimples, too big or too
826 small a mouth, a protuberant bottom or big breasts. Particularly disliked is too big a head or a 'curved face', that is a face which in silhouette does not fall into one plane. White and even teeth and a pleasant smile are also desirable. Men and women are considered equal in beauty but a woman is considered to be at her most beautiful at the age of twelve, a man at the age of twenty. It is considered that on the whole a beautiful man will marry a beautiful woman and an ugly man an ugly woman, but this does not happen invariably; and the ugliness of a person is not considered to be a valid reason for refusing a marriage. A woman's beauty is considered to be somewhat spoilt by childbearing.

826 The differences in beauty of children are remarked but little importance is paid to childish beauty as it is considered essentially impermanent. A girl with a big head and eyes and body and feet is considered somewhat man-like and it is thought that she will work slowly in everything. A man with small features and particularly long eyelashes is considered to look like a woman; such a person will be a swift runner and a clever climber of trees and rocks, able to go where others cannot. Apart from these qualities the idea of temperament is not linked at all with physical appearance.

Freckles are considered disfiguring; they are the *tamtoom* of children who are not orphans eating bamboo shoots when the rice is ripe. 'Just as children have parents above them so rice has bamboo above it; consequently children who have no parents are not affected by this.' Black marks on the skin are caused by young people eating pig's stomach. There is no remedy for either of these disfigurements. On the whole beauty is not of much positive emotional importance; it is only when people are markedly unbeautiful that they are liable to be shunned. Beauty adds to the desirability of strangers as sexual partners; I do not think it is remarked at all in people with whom one is familiar. At the big monastery feasts I often asked people whom they considered to be the best-looking person present; when they did not produce an obscene joke as an answer they would usually refuse to pronounce judgement unless there was a stranger present, in which case the stranger was nearly always chosen. Good-quality and clean clothes and jewels add to the self-confidence of the wearer and to a certain extent enhance the wearer's beauty; but clothes and jewels could
832 never be a substitute for beauty. Nobody would think of borrowing
426 other people's clothes or jewels in order to appear finer and richer

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the [826]

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856 upper. Should the contrary occur it will indicate that the child is a victim of the evil supernatural Sumoo Thor. When such people
826 grow up all their domestic animals will fail; if the child is a girl her husband will die young and she will be left an early widow; if a boy all his children will die in infancy. There is no unanimity as to whether parents would inform their children when they grow older of such evil prognosis; the general opinion is that though parents themselves would not tell the children the elder siblings are liable to know of the fact and to mention it in the course of family squabbles. Tobgé's sister is believed to have Sumoo Thor as she has pointed teeth in the front of her lower jaw. People have teased her about this but she has replied that she 'doesn't care, and anyhow her odd teeth are the result of a *tamtoom* and have nothing to do with Sumoo Thor.' There is nothing to do to avert the misfortunes from teeth arising in the wrong place; it is the destiny following a child from its previous incarnation. Similarly moles above the level of the eyes in boys and below them in girls portray the presence of Sumoo Thor; moles in the contrary positions are lucky.

A baby should not be given either bear or frog to eat or it will be late in speaking. You can tell from the way a child cries when it is six months old if it is going to be dumb or not.

854 Until children start walking they do not usually have clothes at all; in the house they are wrapped up in warm folded cloths, not so tightly as to restrict their movements, and usually lie on their back on the floor or raised bed-partition. For the first month or six weeks and occasionally longer they are carried in the arms; after that they are carried on the back of a parent or elder sibling. There are two positions in which the child is held on the back; the most usual is a semi-foetal one with the enveloping cloth catching the child under the knees which are folded up to the body so that the child only touches its carrier from the knees to the feet and with the upper part of the body. Occasionally, however, children, especially when they have passed one year, are fastened with their legs spread on the hips of the carrier. The baby is completely enveloped in a big cloth folded three or four times, which goes round the baby's body and is fastened round the front of the carrier. It always needs the help of a second person to place a baby on the carrier's back; the carrier supports the baby from behind with his or her hands and the helper folds the cloth round and supports the baby while the carrier ties it. The enveloping cloth usually comes up to the neck and the baby's head lolls com-

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833 potent; trustworthy people said that when they were first married they would copulate with their wives five or six, and even eight or nine times in the course of the night, though they would then be tired the next day. I have got no comparable information from women but such statements were often made in mixed company without the women present making any comment or in any way expressing incredulity. This potency diminishes around the age of thirty, but copulation once nightly is still the general rule for married couples. Tafoor claimed that in his youth he was almost indefatiguable, but says that now he only sleeps with his wife once every three or four nights; this is the reason why he is relatively fat, for chastity induces fatness. It is believed that people accustomed to regular copulation will feel extremely uncomfortable for the first few days if for any reason their partner is removed; but it is considered that people over thirty should be able to support long periods of chastity (with the exception, some laymen say, of the lamas, who cannot do without sex even for a week).

The normal position for Lepchas copulating is for the woman to lie absolutely prone and relaxed, while the man kneels in front of her between her legs. In situations where discretion is necessary both parties lie on their sides, copulation taking place *a retro;* and in some sudden and quick encounters both parties remain standing, the woman leaning against a tree or wall. During copulation the woman lies completely motionless and relaxed, but this passivity is not equated with non-participation, and the orgasms of both sexes are considered identical in nature. The Lepcha attitude to 831 semen is practically the same as that commonly held in Europe; it is thought to be a secretion which is constantly produced and stored against use, so that a husband who has been for some while separated from his wife will have particularly large reserves. The testicles are regarded as the reservoirs of semen; they are not paid much attention to in conversation and have little rôle in the constant flow of sexual jokes. It is believed that if a man's testicles [826 842] hang lower than his penis he is more likely to be fertile than if the contrary is the case. Semen is considered to be a rather unpleasant and soiling substance, and these characteristics are advanced as one of the major reasons against masturbation. Lepcha men consider that copulation is most enjoyable either with a very young girl or with a woman who has borne more than one child; in the latter case there is the added advantage that copulation is thought to be much less exhausting. Men with large penises are considered to give

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

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time as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own 843
house-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must not tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a bag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended from his shoulder happens to break he must on no account pick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills out. He must not eat animals which have met their death by accident, or which have been killed by some beast of prey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any kind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if he does so he must run away at once and let others deal with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap; nor touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is somewhat unexpected in a completely horseless community), or both the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by any chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period of his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by keeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826] child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period. If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [753] would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843 father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826 the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774] full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844 and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event. It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847
are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are [431] paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only [842] on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no pre-
846 conceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to
827 their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

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Jiroong, who has extraordinarily precise memories of his infancy said that 'he was three when his sister was born. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth, which he witnessed and which frightened him very much. He was told that the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*. He was weaned in two ways; his mother's breasts were smeared with excrement, and a sister of his father took him away to her home and told him he must not cry because "Sanrong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him". He remembers vividly that for a week he cried every night for his mother's breast, and then resigned himself to doing without. For some time his aunt looked after him, sometimes keeping him with her at her house, and sometimes going to his home and sleeping with him.' In the same way Tobgé's wife had sent her son, aged a little over two, to live with her parents in their village a day's journey away. Since she was not pregnant again this conduct was disapproved of; it was considered to be a further illustration of Tobgé's irresponsibility and her immorality. 862

Normally a child is only suckled by its mother, but if the mother dies, or for any other reason becomes incapable of suckling the child, it may be suckled by another woman whom the child will call 'mother', or occasionally by the grandmother. A child does not have more than one nurse at a time, and would not be given a feed by a lactating woman during the mother's temporary absence. The reason given for this is that in taking another woman's milk the child would contract a debt which it would never be able to repay; and this debt would be a burden to it after its own death. 853

It is a general Lepcha belief that any woman who has once borne a child can produce milk spontaneously when a baby sucks; and this seems to be borne out by the fact that on occasion if the mother dies the grandmother will suckle the grandchild. I myself saw Kurma's mother-in-law suckling her granddaughter, though it was over twenty years since she herself had borne her last child. Some women too can produce milk without having borne a child; at first this milk is indigestible for the infant, but it is subsequently perfectly all right. If the mother dies the husband's breasts will very often swell; but they only produce a sort of lymph and not proper milk. As far as my observations and inquiries go it seems clear that Lepcha women lactate with far more facility than European women. 853 147 827

A youngest child will continue sucking until the mother's milk dries up, or until the child 'becomes ashamed'; this may continue 853

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

861 draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given
867 a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born [827 858] 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

868 At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

857 From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

855 As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children
869 —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827 881]
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the protoparent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
[751] its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[6]
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[6] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people 626
who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to 157
allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters 828
of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to 153
describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

all three saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the kanya and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.' 159X 556

ii

An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls. 159X 732 [828]

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a 159X girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted [833] one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived [837] husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi.* [826] Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him afrer he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the [753] presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on [428] his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951)1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away.

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held responsible for all accidental death.

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mŭn* from the power of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to come in the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mŭn* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mŭn* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —"to keep the demon down"—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol hung*[11] wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to "kill the demon". All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mŭn* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Mŭk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rŭm lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one.

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

361 villages on the Zongu bank. Excluding the Talung monastery, which is a couple of days' journey from most of the villages, and 184 which, save for a guardian, is empty except during certain festivals, there are no lamaist monasteries and very few lamas on this bank. [829] The inhabitants of this portion are considered by the people of Zongu to be uncivilised and rude, keeping much more to the habits of their forefathers. For a great deal of their food they rely on hunting and forest produce; their religion is still almost entirely that of the Mun, the lamaist propaganda having reached them very slightly. Owing to the excessively precipitous nature of the ground I never went over to this side of the river; on a few occasions however I saw some of the inhabitants.

361 There are in Zongu itself twenty-two settlements with distinctive names, and across the river eight more; some of these 621 named settlements only consist of two or three houses and they are administratively and emotionally divided into twelve districts. Although it is convenient to speak of villages these settlements have no sort of geographical unity; the houses are either isolated in the fields and forests, or gathered in small groups of three or four; I never saw more than four houses which were close neighbours. Except for the three villages—Lingthem, Gyatong and Tangvoong—which possess a monastery, there is no sort of focal centre to the village, and it would be possible for a casual traveller to pass through quite a large village without being aware of its existence. Lingthem, where I lived, consisted of 33 houses; it is the biggest village on the Talung side of Zongu, and the second biggest in the reserve; the biggest of all is Gyatong, which, with its neighbour Hi, contains 60 houses. From the spur of one hill in Lingthem it is possible to see eight houses at once; I should reckon that there were quite three miles and three thousand feet between the lowest house to the east and the highest house to the west in the village.

621 When three or four houses are grouped together they are usually given a distinctive name. This grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours; people living in adjoining houses may be closely related, or they may be complete strangers, and full brothers may live separated by the full distance of the village.[2] The metaphysical desiderata, described later in this chapter, for the choice of a house site and

[2] For the plan of the houses of Lingthem and their inhabitants, see Appendix I, b.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar') 262
and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though 825
on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, [787]
particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is [824]
believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and [831]
have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building stand- 346
ing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting
835 of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is
[538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem-
[195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual
[831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand
[833] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-
831 charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

152 in foreign surroundings; also his second wife came from a mixed
581 community. Katel and Aga on the other hand are both subnormal; they are foolish, suspicious and disliked.

152 For the Lepchas of Zongu sexual activity is practically divorced from emotion; it is a pleasant and amusing experience, and as
831 much a necessity as food and drink; and like food and drink it does not matter from whom you receive it, as long as you get it; though you are naturally grateful to the people who provide you with either regularly. One of the most difficult of all concepts for the European to take into consideration is the non-European attitude to sexual activity; with us, explicitly on the part of men, sexual desirability is most intimately bound up with aesthetic considerations. Although there may be individual disagreement as to who are included in the terms, potential sexual partners are divided into the categories of 'attractive' and 'unattractive'; and we believe that only perverts or prostitutes will have anything to do with the second category. Primitive people, I believe, do not make this distinction; there is social kudos to be acquired from being the known possessor of a beautiful wife or mistress; but for temporary sexual gratification any willing partner is equally acceptable. I found it extremely difficult to accept the notion that most of the men with young and pretty wives at one time or another slept with the two sixty-year-old haridans who were the promiscuous women of Lingthem; but as far as I can make out their invitations were never refused.[13] Fourteen-year-old Chimpet gave a good illus-

[13] Professor Malinowski records a similar situation in the Trobriands in *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge: London, 1929) page 247–8: 'The (medical officer) was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with a very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhea, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman, so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. . . .' 'I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic but regular intercourse.' Professor Malinowski finds this notion so repulsive that he accounts for it 'by their manner of carrying out this physiological activity', which in the Trobriands may entail very slight physical contact. This explanation does not however hold good for the Lepchas; see Chapter Twelve, p. 330. I think primitives dissociate, in a way we cannot, the public attitudes of parading a desirable partner, and the private ones of physiological gratification. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in the Somerset village where I live potentially jealous situations arise in the case of people whom I personally would consider, either through age or ugliness, to be almost sexless.

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tration of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had 152
twice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accom- 831
panied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he
enjoyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does
not want to marry the girl because he does not like her.

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with 595
his field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because
he has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbour-
hood, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him
and to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted
without any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free
in the choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make
the request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly
as if he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events.
The co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights,
but all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, [843]
and he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception
is only made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence
makes his paternity a physiological impossibility.

In the recent past there have only been two cases of such poly-
andry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above,
who first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger
brother'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who
shared his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a
lama attached to another village who was almost always away, so
that the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his
shared wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a
wife, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless
the two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as
it is liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advan-
tages for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an
easy way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an
extra adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife
when you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband
on the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor
and unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that
there are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of [835]
polyandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with
your husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are
obviously suspended.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

afflicted household must touch the knots and then the Mun; then the Mun will call on all the devils to be contented with the blood of the sacrifice and not to take the patient, after which he throws the rope into the air; if the rope falls end outwards (i.e. the end away from the goat falls towards the door) it means the devils will be satisfied; if it falls towards the house the prognosis is bad. After this the animal is killed and the *gaʒook* and *sha-fot* offered to the devil with a plate and a pot filled with rice, a rupee and a ceremonial scarf, together with some of the invalid's ornaments and clothing (these last are only offered symbolically) and also a cup of *chi* with different grains in it. Then the Mun constructs a phallus out of wood, which is called in its guardian function *moong long tik*; this is set up between two stones leaning slightly forward, somewhere in the forest, and anointed with the blood of the slain animal and *chi*; this will keep the devil away, for no devil can pass this guardian.

(2) *To drive away the ghost of a dead child, called Num-een moong, which kills young children by infantile diarrhoea.* After an animal has been sacrificed the person who is troubled by the *moong* goes down to a narrow stream; the troubled person stands on the right of the stream and the Mun on the left of it. Then a 'gateway' is made over the stream of two bundles of elephant grass and brambles; and the Mun holds in each hand a bundle made out of wild raspberries, nettles and all other thorny and prickly plants. These bundles are dipped in water and *pék* over the sufferer several times; then a bamboo *chi* holder filled with blood and *chi* and shut up at both ends, and a leaf filled with fried rice and meat and blood are *pék* over the patient and thrown through the gateway for the devil; then the bunches of thorny plants are thrown through the gateway and finally the gateway is filled up with thorny plants 'so that it looks like a tree'. The Mun does this at two other places some way apart on the stream; he must do these second two—one above and one below the original one—alone, and after completing them he must return straight to his own house without meeting anybody; should he meet people Num-een *moong* will start haunting them.

Num-een *moong* is the devil released by the death of young children under the age of about ten; this devil pursues living people and especially other children; older people who die do not let loose a devil. The Num-een *moong* persists for about three years after the child's death; when there are bad storms the devil can be heard hooting 'Oo-oo-oo.' Children are particularly

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark 527
of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody
they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues 527
voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great 522
deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks 831
which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha
monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some
rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves
or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail
while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind,
but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems
to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is
a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occa-
sionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another
young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny.
The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the
younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely [201]
roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer
gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is
being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face;
this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a
youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting
his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts;
with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being
carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious
homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is
always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and
never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for
oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms
round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply
their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour
which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions 527
are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts
continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent
day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days
and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they [147]
happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such
conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and
I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous
eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the
Fields.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas
831 was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-
831 saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But
842 the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

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where he was going to pray: the table with the cup filled with strained *chi* and the incense burner already lit was in front of him; the Mandal was seated beside him, with his wives opposite; everything was ready for the ceremony to begin. Before praying the Mun made an, as it were, introductory speech, addressed partly to the Mandal, and partly to the other people present.

The Mun: I'm a very old man, and I found the journey very trying indeed; I was tired and felt I'd like to rest, and —— a girl. I'm really a very old man now; but since you're the Mandal, and this is your house I shall do what I can. When you first sent a messenger with a load of *chi* I said 'No, I cannot go'. But you sent twice and three times and I couldn't resist you. It is true that in rank as Mandal you are above me; but in age you could be my grandson. Just as a small girl is frightened when she sees a big penis and runs away, or as a little boy is frightened when he sees a big vulva, so am I frightened of you. Nevertheless I shall do what I can. I am very sorry for you because although you have had four wives you have got no son. I think this is a source of great worry to you, but what can be done? It is not your fault; you have treated your wives well. It is not a bad deed but misfortune which makes you childless. Were I to say I could do nothing for you, you would be disappointed; shall I do this ceremony and nothing result I shall be ashamed. Nevertheless I will do what I can. You—his wives—you are my sisters and daughters: tell me, my daughters, does this husband of yours treat you badly?

The Mandal: My parents-in-law are very strict with me, and were I to do so they would punish me.

Tafoor: And then you'd take it out of your wives—or put it in—very roughly. (*General laughter*)

The Mandal (while the Mun smears butter on the cup): When I was ill it was discovered that Sabdok *moonig* was troubling me, and Hit *rum* was angry, so I sent for you, because you are an old and experienced man. So please be so kind as to sacrifice properly, so that I may be troubled no longer. Please do so, whether my body is cured thereby or not.

The Mun: Were you to die, what would happen to your wives and daughter—women who are all alone?

The Mandal: Don't worry about that; in that case they can go home.

The Mun: I have already said that I am old and weak; if my sacrifice is unsuccessful, don't blame me. I take all you here to

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522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

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would count as incestuous. Another reason is the cultural concept that there is no temperamental difference between men and women; except that men are usually stronger physically identical standards of behaviour are expected from both sexes; the standards of beauty are identical; except that they may not kill animals nor perform lamaist ceremonies nor own land women suffer under no disability because they are women. With this general conception of the similarity of the two sexes the differences of appearance and function of the primary sexual characteristics becomes even more striking and worthy of comment; and it is worth noting again in this context the extraordinary amount of fantasy about the independent life of the genitalia which occurs in the Lepcha stories. It is also possible that in removing all intense emotion from sexual activity the Lepchas have also destroyed some of the emotional release and psychological satisfaction.

Some of the young men were particularly given to obscenity, particularly Tobgé, a ne'er-do-well whose wife, it will be remembered, was carrying on with Dadool, and Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother. Chudo was twenty-nine, the father of three children, and very fond of his wife. He always gave the impression of being very much younger than his years; he was particularly sweet-tempered, even for a Lepcha, and very industrious, but he was extremely childish, perhaps because his elder brother, Tafoor, was so very learned and responsible. He had rather a grotesque sense of humour and was very fond of imitating lamaist dances, almost parodying them, and of making surprising jokes and unexpected little presents. When he learned I was fond of flowers he used to bring me nearly every day some orchid or other odd flower that he had found in his work travelling about the country-side. If the younger men were more inclined to obscenity so were the elder women, particularly Lumba's first wife, a Mun aged forty-seven, who was completely outrageous and shameless in her speech and behaviour; she was a jolly bawdy old creature, rather in the tradition of Marie Lloyd. As far as my information goes, and on such matters it is very extensive, she was relatively chaste in her private life; nobody repeated any scandal about her. When I talked to women about sex and childbirth and similar subjects the older ones used always to answer quite freely; but occasionally if there was a young woman in the group, she would ask why I talked about such things which made her feel ashamed; if this happened the older women would usually stop the conversation, giving

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831 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal
522 manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes,
522 though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed,
537 apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the
537 person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

842 According to Lepcha theory a child's life starts at the moment of
843 conception. When the two secretions mingle[1] the soul arrives from heaven or the place of the gods (the first being the lamaist, the second the Mun, repository of unborn people); the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the flesh and blood. The first portion of the foetus to be formed is the
843 eyes, which are completed at the end of the first month; then from round the eyes the head develops and then the rest of the body downwards. The foetus is completely human with all its organs, and even its hair, at the end of the fifth month.

Within the womb is something resembling a nipple through which the child draws nourishment; this nourishment is something like butter, and is the transmuted food of the mother, just as milk is after birth. Consequently the mother is not permanently depleted by child-bearing; none of her body has gone to feed the child.

842 Conception is shown by the cessation of the menses, which were instituted for that purpose. The child does not feed on the menstrual blood; menstruation is exclusively a calendar.

843 At the fifth month when the baby is considered fully formed the expectant parents must start observing the numerous pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is not to be born malformed, or if the mother is not to have a difficult delivery. The entering into this period of pre-natal precautions is established by a Mun *pék*-ing both parents with a bunch of elephant grass in one hand and a live fowl in the other. Both parents are equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, and in point of fact the greater number of the precautions to be observed are concerned with work which is liable to fall to a man rather than a
843 woman. Copulation after conception has no influence on the foetus,
833 except incestuously, which would produce a miscarriage, and may

[831] [1] The Lepchas consider semen and the vaginal secretions to be parallel substances; they are called penis-water and vagina-water.

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The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

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833 potent; trustworthy people said that when they were first married they would copulate with their wives five or six, and even eight or nine times in the course of the night, though they would then be tired the next day. I have got no comparable information from women but such statements were often made in mixed company without the women present making any comment or in any way expressing incredulity. This potency diminishes around the age of thirty, but copulation once nightly is still the general rule for married couples. Tafoor claimed that in his youth he was almost indefatiguable, but says that now he only sleeps with his wife once every three or four nights; this is the reason why he is relatively fat, for chastity induces fatness. It is believed that people accustomed to regular copulation will feel extremely uncomfortable for the first few days if for any reason their partner is removed; but it is considered that people over thirty should be able to support long periods of chastity (with the exception, some laymen say, of the lamas, who cannot do without sex even for a week).

The normal position for Lepchas copulating is for the woman to lie absolutely prone and relaxed, while the man kneels in front of her between her legs. In situations where discretion is necessary both parties lie on their sides, copulation taking place *a retro;* and in some sudden and quick encounters both parties remain standing, the woman leaning against a tree or wall. During copulation the woman lies completely motionless and relaxed, but this passivity is not equated with non-participation, and the orgasms of both
● 831 sexes are considered identical in nature. The Lepcha attitude to semen is practically the same as that commonly held in Europe; it is thought to be a secretion which is constantly produced and stored against use, so that a husband who has been for some while separated from his wife will have particularly large reserves. The testicles are regarded as the reservoirs of semen; they are not paid much attention to in conversation and have little rôle in the constant flow of sexual jokes. It is believed that if a man's testicles
[826 842] hang lower than his penis he is more likely to be fertile than if the contrary is the case. Semen is considered to be a rather unpleasant and soiling substance, and these characteristics are advanced as one of the major reasons against masturbation. Lepcha men consider that copulation is most enjoyable either with a very young girl or with a woman who has borne more than one child; in the latter case there is the added advantage that copulation is thought to be much less exhausting. Men with large penises are considered to give

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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831 two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These
522 two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

831 The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

585 The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after
[587] the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration
[787] the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some 766
firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *pék*s the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*tiklyong-kup*) is set up [831]
between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time.

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* 764
all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*.

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the 764
dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn 778
a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine

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159 *April 7th.*

I felt unwell this day and did not go out but I did not tell other people about it.

April 8th.

Kurma came up in the morning and told me before we had spoken about anything that he had dreamt that I should be ill.[18] He said that he had got rid of his heart ache by making a small offering of butter and rice instead of the proper big offering. Today I asked him to tell me more about his early life, which he had sketched out a couple of days earlier, and he talked practically the whole day without interruption. He went into the most minute details of his [831] sexual activities and physical make-up. He obviously fancies himself very much as a lover.

April 10th.

Kurma talked about a great variety of subjects, chiefly institutionalised customs. He said that according to his standard only two people in the village could be called rich—the Mandal and Takneum *youmi.* He said that he himself was as rich as Jiroong (as a matter of fact this is untrue), but he counts himself a poor man. He also told part of the stories of the first Dorjé Lapoon and Jiroong.[19]

April 16th.

Kurma was occupied from the 16th till the 19th with the business of arranging the repairing of the bamboo bridge which joins Lingthem and Liklyang. He had to get the workers and also the materials and supervise the work which was being performed. He was very busy and officious and seemed to be enjoying himself but complained of the work which prevented him working on his own fields.

April 24th.

Kurma came up again and I chiefly talked to him about the facts which I had learnt since his last visit of general importance, seeking to get confirmation of them. Among the other subjects was the question of the money lenders and indebtedness; Kurma told the history of his own debt (given in Chapter Four). On this subject

[18] Dream given in Chapter Seven, p. 186.
[19] See Chapter Sixteen.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
● [831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok,
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

.2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

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521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

[313] 342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

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597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child
[428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does
831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no
[521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should
[212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental
535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen
584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

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boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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821 sudden burst of thunder, not an unusual occurrence in
831 Lingtem. This would at first sight appear to have no connection with the subject of sex; but actually it has. It is considered at all times dangerous to laugh when there is thunder about, but this is the story Karma told me:

821 "Once, when I was a small boy, I went on a visit to Gangtok. I had been down to the bazaar and was sitting talking to some Nepalis in the shop of a betel-nut seller. There was a small lizard running up and down the wall at the time and one of the men laughed and spat a jet of red *pan* juice at it. It remained without moving, merely blinking its eyes in the peculiar quick manner that lizards have: it then ate some of the spittle. Immediately after it suddenly grew quite dark and still; and then there was a terrific crash of thunder followed by the most vivid streak of lightning I have ever seen. We were all thrown to the ground, and several of the men were so badly injured that they had to be taken to hospital; but I myself was only a little dazed. There is no doubt that the lizard caused this sudden burst of thunder and called it down on the men as a punishment for laughing at it.

821 "Incidentally, there are certain men who involuntarily
831 cause sudden thunder if anyone laughs on beholding their private parts. There are not many such; and in fact there is no one living in Lingtem at the moment who possesses this peculiar quality.

"I well remember when the present monastery was being built: there was a boy from a neighbouring village who was helping to carry up stones from the river. Babu was his name. The work was very heavy, and since it was a hot and sultry day the men had discarded most of their clothing. On the way up the hill Babu's trousers slipped down, so that his penis was exposed. All the women started to laugh and to make remarks about his person. Almost at once the sky grew dark and then there was a terrific burst of thunder, followed by lightning. Babu ran off towards Jiroong's house, which was nearby. As he did so we saw the lightning appear

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581
Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [78]
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself
came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of
the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any
way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's
Pi-bo got up and made a short speech. While this was in
progress general conversation ceased: but before it was
finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [831]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking
again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony
of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed.
By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest
was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in
the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms
were now completely filled with people and the smoke was
so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the
room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin
state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring
peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [521]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of
drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still
talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived
Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the
same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the
crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front
of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce
anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene,
since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal
was being prepared and would later be served to all the
guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among
the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight
in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

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While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779]
book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781]
at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358]
Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to

6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently 755
by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from
the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which [787]
was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck- 755
wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. 776
Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depict- 778
ed alike, that is standing, with raised hands ; some scratches in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with [831] legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks 782
and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called 778
moong-ka deu bitomu. After placing various sorts of grain, 776
leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences. 197 174 144

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious 121 114 831 [152] [161]

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114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes : "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex ;
it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour ; it is regarded as almost as essential as food.
Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost
impersonal ; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal
relationships passionately adhered to between sexual part-
ners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts
114 and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
562 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 188 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the protoparent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 88. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
[153] bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's
842 subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

rain-control worked, and cited numerous examples from their past experience to prove it.

This is the only instance of powers which the Lepchas themselves deem supernatural being used in ordinary life. The tradition of sorcery has already been referred to; its use is so rare that it plays no part in the life of most people. There is a tradition of love magic in which the hairs of the two people meant to love one another are plaited and concentrated upon. Although they know the ritual, lamas themselves say that nobody living has performed it. It is said that Mun are requested to do this by one spouse if the other is unfriendly or by parents if their child and his or her spouse disagree: I never heard of an actual instance of this and it would seem as though it were only a tradition.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are. 515

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders. 302 [576]

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him. 302 515

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes, 832 826

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 pop-eyes or folded eyelids are ugly; so are dimples, too big or too
826 small a mouth, a protuberant bottom or big breasts. Particularly disliked is too big a head or a 'curved face', that is a face which in silhouette does not fall into one plane. White and even teeth and a pleasant smile are also desirable. Men and women are considered equal in beauty but a woman is considered to be at her most beautiful at the age of twelve, a man at the age of twenty. It is considered that on the whole a beautiful man will marry a beautiful woman and an ugly man an ugly woman, but this does not happen invariably; and the ugliness of a person is not considered to be a valid reason for refusing a marriage. A woman's beauty is considered to be somewhat spoilt by childbearing.

826 The differences in beauty of children are remarked but little importance is paid to childish beauty as it is considered essentially impermanent. A girl with a big head and eyes and body and feet is considered somewhat man-like and it is thought that she will work slowly in everything. A man with small features and particularly long eyelashes is considered to look like a woman; such a person will be a swift runner and a clever climber of trees and rocks, able to go where others cannot. Apart from these qualities the idea of temperament is not linked at all with physical appearance.

Freckles are considered disfiguring; they are the *tamtoom* of children who are not orphans eating bamboo shoots when the rice is ripe. 'Just as children have parents above them so rice has bamboo above it; consequently children who have no parents are not affected by this.' Black marks on the skin are caused by young people eating pig's stomach. There is no remedy for either of these disfigurements. On the whole beauty is not of much positive emotional importance; it is only when people are markedly unbeautiful that they are liable to be shunned. Beauty adds to the desirability of strangers as sexual partners; I do not think it is remarked at all in people with whom one is familiar. At the big monastery feasts I often asked people whom they considered to be the best-looking person present; when they did not produce an obscene joke as an answer they would usually refuse to pronounce judgement unless there was a stranger present, in which case the stranger was nearly always chosen. Good-quality and clean clothes and jewels add to the self-confidence of the wearer and to a certain extent enhance the wearer's beauty; but clothes and jewels could
832 never be a substitute for beauty. Nobody would think of borrowing
426 other people's clothes or jewels in order to appear finer and richer

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry; but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf 793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind [522] were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

[832 522] One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

600 All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

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Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was 764
kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse 789
was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, 782
four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'. L

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in 771
many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as 764
Pōn. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim 782
says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pōn-pōn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pōn* for three days and nights.' L

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after 775
death through subterranean passages to the local deities of 823
Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages. L

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in 771
Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Ngu*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced 835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is [538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem- [195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual [831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand [833] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are 831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

842 According to Lepcha theory a child's life starts at the moment of
843 conception. When the two secretions mingle[1] the soul arrives from heaven or the place of the gods (the first being the lamaist, the second the Mun, repository of unborn people); the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the flesh and blood. The first portion of the foetus to be formed is the
843 eyes, which are completed at the end of the first month; then from round the eyes the head develops and then the rest of the body downwards. The foetus is completely human with all its organs, and even its hair, at the end of the fifth month.

Within the womb is something resembling a nipple through which the child draws nourishment; this nourishment is something like butter, and is the transmuted food of the mother, just as milk is after birth. Consequently the mother is not permanently depleted by child-bearing; none of her body has gone to feed the child.

842 Conception is shown by the cessation of the menses, which were instituted for that purpose. The child does not feed on the menstrual blood; menstruation is exclusively a calendar.

843 At the fifth month when the baby is considered fully formed the expectant parents must start observing the numerous pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is not to be born malformed, or if the mother is not to have a difficult delivery. The entering into this period of pre-natal precautions is established by a Mun *pék*-ing both parents with a bunch of elephant grass in one hand and a live fowl in the other. Both parents are equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, and in point of fact the greater number of the precautions to be observed are concerned with work which is liable to fall to a man rather than a
843 woman. Copulation after conception has no influence on the foetus,
833 except incestuously, which would produce a miscarriage, and may

[831] [1] The Lepchas consider semen and the vaginal secretions to be parallel substances; they are called penis-water and vagina-water.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

843 [833]

be continued right up to birth; in the last weeks it is generally performed *a retro* lying on the side.

It would be tedious to give a complete list of the pre-natal precautions to be observed, but the following are some typical examples. If either of the parents are engaged in making a fence he or she must do the whole work by himself; otherwise the baby cannot be born properly. The father must not take any fish out of a trap in the river or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Neither parent must lock up anything except their own box or the child will not be able to be born until what is closed is opened; even the house door must not be fastened. Neither parent may eat animals which have met their death by accident or by being killed by a wild beast; the father must never look at a recently killed animal; he can kill animals but must run away at once. The father must not touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle; should he do so the mother and child are liable to die, but this can be prevented if a bridle is kept in the house which can be *pék* over the woman during delivery. If either parent should be weaving a mat or cloth he or she must never quite finish it but must leave a little bit over. The mother must not eat any joined fruit such as a double banana or the child's toes will be webbed. Neither parent must stick poles into the ground or tie knots or drive in nails or put small stones into the cracks between bigger stones when building a wall; all of these prevent proper delivery. Expectant parents must not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will be born dead; in the case of a solar eclipse both parents must stop in the house all day. If a child has recently died the paths it used to walk in and its house must be avoided; and as a general precaution it is better to avoid the paths and houses of all recently dead people. Expectant parents must not watch a dog being born; if they do so the child will have one eye smaller than the other. If expectant parents move a sacred image the child will be born dumb. Should either parent look at or kill a field-mouse or should they eat rice which has stuck to the bottom of the cooking-pot the placenta will not descend. There are a very great number of prohibitions similar to those listed above; the second half of pregnancy is a period of constant watchfulness for both parents.

There is a disease called *tamdit* which afflicts expectant parents; one loses all appetite while the other eats voraciously. This does not affect all people and may strike either sex.

The sex of a child is fixed after five months; and one can tell

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name. This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone 846 else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, 846 moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not 862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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854 is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him;
857 Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers
854 often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few
[833] weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

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881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

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584 Betrothal does not by any means necessarily imply sexual connection between the betrothed. It does, however, usually indicate the commencement of sexual activity for both parties, and almost always for the boys. The majority of Lepcha men receive their sexual initiation and education from a potential levirate spouse—the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle'—and very often at the woman's direct invitation. It is a Lepcha axiom that women never make the first advances and most people repeat this statement; but a number of men when recounting their own early sex experiences tell of direct invitation and solicitation from these potential spouses; timid Jiroong indeed was at the age of fifteen as nearly raped as it is possible for a man to be by his elder brother's wife. Fathers instruct their sons as to the women they have a right to sleep with, and the women whom, though potentially heritable, they must avoid because their fathers have already slept with them.[3] Elder brothers, too, on their marriage give their younger brothers formal permission to sleep with their wives. These legitimate copulations must be practised discreetly and nearly always take place during the temporary absence of the real spouse. It is considered desirable that a boy should first sleep with a woman older than himself so as to be taught how to do it properly. For the Lepchas there is nothing incongruous in a man sleeping with a woman twice his age, and it would seem indeed that young men find older women more attractive; in the few cases where a young man has been able to choose his own bride they have always chosen elder women. It has already been remarked that fully grown younger brothers transfer many of their attitudes towards their fathers to their elder brothers; I find it, however, impossible to gauge to what extent if any the elder brothers' wives are equated with the mothers.

[833] 836

833 836 Although the great majority of men receive their sexual initiation from an elder sister-in-law, a few have their first experience with contemporaries. Thus Chimpet has twice slept with a girl of his own age at Parfok at her invitation; he enjoyed the experience and would like to repeat it, but does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. Similarly Rigya was seduced at the age of fifteen by a girl of the same age in a neighbouring village;

[3] See Chapter Six, p. 153.

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it was not her first experience, though it was his. Subsequently his parents tried to betroth him to her, but she was already bespoke. 833

I unfortunately was not able to obtain as much or as precise detail on the early sexual life of women as I was of men;[4] from such information and reports as I was able to gather it would seem that potential sororate spouses play a much smaller rôle in the initiation of young girls, chiefly no doubt because they generally live some way away. When they are not deflowered by their spouse (this happens sometimes) girls would seem to start their sexual life with unrelated men, often it would appear with visitors to their village. Among the Lepchas the difficulty of talking to women on such subjects was not, as more usually happens, the jealousy of the husbands, but the fact that almost every woman from eight to eighty interpreted any sort of special attention as an attempt at seduction, an attempt which—no matter what their youth or age—they had no intention of repelling. [836]

Until the husband brings his wife home, and indeed till the birth of the first child, Lepcha men and women have complete sexual freedom at every point where this freedom does not endanger the social fabric; that is to say that all potential partners outside the stringent incest categories are permissible, provided that adultery, as the Lepchas understand the term, is not flagrant, continuous or emotionally important. After the birth of the first child adultery —that is to say connection with a woman who is not a potential wife—on the part of the father is thought to endanger the life of the child or children. Except for casual encounters at the forest or at feasts my impression is that adultery is uncommon, and that copulation with permitted partners only takes place intermittently in the absence of the actual spouses. 837

Lepcha sexual experience can be divided into four categories: legitimate copulation with one's spouse, which almost always takes place in the house; semi-legitimate copulation with potential sororate and levirate spouses, which usually takes place either in the house during the husband's temporary absence or in casual encounters in the forest or field-houses, since it is considered tactless to allow the husband to witness such copulations; thirdly, intrigues with unmarried girls which entail clandestine visits by the young man by night; and, lastly, sudden and clandestine encounters 836 837

[4] I was told the precise details of the early sex experience of at least half the men of Lingthem, but only three or four of the women. It was one of the most popular subjects of conversation among the men at the monastery feasts.

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The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

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833 potent; trustworthy people said that when they were first married they would copulate with their wives five or six, and even eight or nine times in the course of the night, though they would then be tired the next day. I have got no comparable information from women but such statements were often made in mixed company without the women present making any comment or in any way expressing incredulity. This potency diminishes around the age of thirty, but copulation once nightly is still the general rule for married couples. Tafoor claimed that in his youth he was almost indefatiguable, but says that now he only sleeps with his wife once every three or four nights; this is the reason why he is relatively fat, for chastity induces fatness. It is believed that people accustomed to regular copulation will feel extremely uncomfortable for the first few days if for any reason their partner is removed; but it is considered that people over thirty should be able to support long periods of chastity (with the exception, some laymen say, of the lamas, who cannot do without sex even for a week).

The normal position for Lepchas copulating is for the woman to lie absolutely prone and relaxed, while the man kneels in front of her between her legs. In situations where discretion is necessary both parties lie on their sides, copulation taking place *a retro;* and in some sudden and quick encounters both parties remain standing, the woman leaning against a tree or wall. During copulation the woman lies completely motionless and relaxed, but this passivity is not equated with non-participation, and the orgasms of both sexes are considered identical in nature. The Lepcha attitude to 831 semen is practically the same as that commonly held in Europe; it is thought to be a secretion which is constantly produced and stored against use, so that a husband who has been for some while separated from his wife will have particularly large reserves. The testicles are regarded as the reservoirs of semen; they are not paid much attention to in conversation and have little rôle in the constant flow of sexual jokes. It is believed that if a man's testicles [826 842] hang lower than his penis he is more likely to be fertile than if the contrary is the case. Semen is considered to be a rather unpleasant and soiling substance, and these characteristics are advanced as one of the major reasons against masturbation. Lepcha men consider that copulation is most enjoyable either with a very young girl or with a woman who has borne more than one child; in the latter case there is the added advantage that copulation is thought to be much less exhausting. Men with large penises are considered to give

Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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Kurma spies on the birth of Apot.

X159 'When I was about six or seven I spied on a neighbour giving birth to a baby. I did this by standing under the house floor which was made of crossed bamboo; I did it by myself out of curiosity because I wanted to know what an adult woman's vulva looked like, and to see how babies were born. The woman was hanging on to a rope from the ceiling and an older woman squatted behind her and held her breasts; the woman's belt was loosened and from below I had a very good view of her vulva. The woman was groaning and at each groan the vulva rounded and the head of the child could be seen; between groans the vulva was oblong. Finally after a discharge of yellow fluid the baby was born suddenly; and then the after-birth.' (*I put some questions to Kurma about this event; he said he recollected no feelings of disgust or fear; on the contrary, the spectacle was probably exciting. He excuses his conduct by saying he was too young to know shame.*)

Early sexual experience.

X159 864 'When I was eight or nine I used to ask the little girls of the neighbourhood to let me see and touch their vulvas; to which they would consent and then lie down. Nobody told me about sex; I knew naturally as everybody does; it is like eating. At the same time I only knew how to do it properly when at the age of ten I saw my elder brother, aged fifteen, lift a girl's legs in the forest. [833] My first sexual experience was when I was twelve, with a girl of the same age. We were both employed watching animals. I had seen older people and they had urged me to try the girl; she agreed but after one attempt would have no more to do with me. Pulling back the prepuce hurt.'

Practical joke played on Kurma.

X159 522 'When I was about ten I was sent to live in a field hut to scare away monkeys and other animals from the ripening grain; with me was a young married man, a relation of Passo's. We had grain and pumpkins to eat. The young man played the following trick on me; he told me to get a big leaf from the forest, which I did; then the young man shat on it and told me to fold it up carefully and carry it right away down to the river; I must not put it near a house or in a field. I did as I was told. This happened for

One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment. 159x [833]

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes. [837] [828]

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him after he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself. [753]

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews. [428]

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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he said among other things, that it is convenient to have the kanya so near as shops but that they cheat very badly in demanding extortionate interest and also in forcing the debtors to sell their crop early in the season when prices are low instead of letting them wait till prices rise. 159X

He again volunteered several anecdotes about his own sexual experiences. He thinks he has slept with about thirty-eight women in all, of many different races—Nepali, Tibetans etc. He likes Tibetan girls the best; there are a couple down the river who can be had at the price of one rupee. Tibetan girls are 'hot'; they move about so that it is necessary to move very quickly to keep them quiet; Lepcha girls lie like a 'corpse'. He has never had any 'venereal disease'. Some years ago at Lik a girl younger than himself gave him a strap of her own weaving; she also used to bring him food and *chi* in her dress. He slept with Tobgé's sister when she was twelve years old and a virgin; he was the first man to have her. He would have liked to have married her, but his wife was then alive; and when she died the girl had married Nahyeun. He is still very fond of her. He said that he would rather have one wife with many children than many wives with none. He prefers the appearance of a woman to her clothes and jewels. Nahyeun's wife was present during most of the morning and he referred to his relations with her in front of her face and was also very familiar with her; she seemed rather pleased but threw a clod of earth at him. He said that he considered shame a bad thing. 159X 833● 159X

April 25th.

Kurma was present at Konchen Tyuchen and got extremely drunk, so drunk that in the morning he did not know what he had done.

April 29th.

Kurma again spent the whole day talking about his past life. In the morning he got a summons from his third wife saying his son was very ill, whereupon he went to try and buy a pig to take with him as a present; he could not find one. He had been given *chi* by one of the people he had called on and was very slightly drunk. For a Lepcha he gets drunk remarkably easily. When I was questioning him about the relative dates of the things he had been talking about he got impatient and asked me why I always asked about himself today instead of asking about the different

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

[856] By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

861 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem, so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting, however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalimpong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and becoming the usual thing among the younger generation: and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such "uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me, it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation, and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders, who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder* brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is not considered to be actually incestuous.

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864 In the same way that a boy usually has his first sexual
●833 experience with a woman years older than himself, so is a girl
842 generally first seduced by some older man. A number of women told us that they started their sexual life at the age of ten; and in every case they had their first experience with a grown man. The people do not see anything offensive in this; and we were unable to convince them that the custom is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the very high rate of sterility among the Jongu women. Nothing short of a complete examination by a gynæcologist would definitely establish this point; but it is significant that the several sterile women with whom we were on sufficiently intimate terms to discuss the subject all owned to having been initiated into sex at a very early age, and by men years older than themselves.

833 Except when a young boy is seduced by some elder relation a woman never makes the suggestion to copulate, although she may hint indirectly that she is not unwilling to submit. When a youth is interested in any particular girl he will generally have his first encounter with her out in the forest, or in some other secluded spot; but once relations between the two have been established it is usual for him to visit her at home. He will, if necessary, travel several miles in the dead of night for this purpose. The girl will previously explain the topography of the house to her lover and describe to him the exact place where she sleeps, so that when the time comes he may enter the house silently and make straight for her bed. He will usually creep in on all fours, stepping over the other sleeping people carefully, so as not to wake them. Should he be discovered he will at once run out of the house, and will not return that night; but if the pair are not disturbed it will generally be about two in the morning before the boy takes his departure. He will generally not leave his own home until everyone is asleep, so that he can depart unnoticed. Should the parents of the girl get to know what is happening they will not usually be angry or display any other emotion. Tafoor said that he would not mind in the least if he

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knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyong-
782 fast to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of
[241 Mayal ; the others come from different supernaturals, barley,
776] wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity ; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share
[841] this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse
[786 between the sexes ; however, the comprehensive ban on in-
833] cestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom
171] which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or
[862] a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must
[815] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food. 224 178

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed. 224 868 [753] 224 [834]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

member of the household go near a big stream nor pour water on the ashes in the house. Tafoor also must refrain from sexual activity, for at the time of the orgasm the gods would look down and be angry.[11] Control of rain can be as localised as is wished; it can extend over a single field or the whole of Zongu, and can be held off as long as the officiant prays. I suggested to Tafoor that he could ruin an enemy by concentrating all the time and preventing any rain falling on the enemy's fields; he agreed that this was so, but the idea seemed to him so ridiculous that he burst out laughing, although he treats this power of his otherwise very seriously and does not jest about it. The control of hail does not require the same precautions but necessitates the presence of some magical objects including a ram's horn.

There is no question but that not only Tafoor but all the people of the neighbourhood believe completely in this power of stopping rain; people from some way away will come with big presents to get Tafoor to stop rain when they want to work their fields and will work for him also as recompense. I unfortunately only found out about this claim to power of Tafoor's in the last month of my stay in Lingthem. Lingthem is very rainy and there were very few days in which no rain fell. In the last month of my stay there were six occasions when Tafoor announced beforehand that he was stopping rain and on those days no rain did in fact fall. The most extraordinary were the three days of the Boom koor ceremony whose date was fixed after some argument about a fortnight before it took place; when the date was finally decided upon Tafoor said immediately that no rain would fall during those three days, and in point of fact those were the only three days during my whole stay in Lingthem during which no rain fell. There were two other fine days during this period without rain for which I asked Tafoor if he was responsible; he said that on those days he had done nothing. In the event of rain falling while he was meant to be stopping it he has the alibi that some more powerful lama has been sending the rain away from his village to Lingthem or the neighbourhood, for the power consists only in shifting the rain and not in destroying it.

It would naturally need far longer observation than I was able to make to pronounce any judgement on this claimed power. It is worth noting that there is no sort of compulsion for the Lepchas to hire Tafoor; many people do not, because they say they cannot afford to, but everybody I questioned was certain that this

[11] Semen is called *tik-oong*—penis water.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

831 522 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 522 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes, though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 537 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed, apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 537 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were completely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

793 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and
834 would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait,
576 which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of
793 respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

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When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

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and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

1 [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Uncle. – Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
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Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

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535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
[834] exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
[813] years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

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439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the
608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis.
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natur-
● [834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong*, nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

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early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so-called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

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been a reason for, a general gathering of all the members of the *ptso*. A traveller among strange people has no claim on the hospitality of unknown members of his *ptso*, though it would still be shameful for two members of the same *ptso* to have sexual connection. More than anything else, the *ptso* is a device for the prevention of incest.

iii

Incest for the Lepchas is horrifying; they do not call it a sin but *nam-toak*, an act which produces a year of disaster for the community. Sin is a lamaist conception and is on the whole only applied to acts like the killing of animals; *nam-toak* is the phrase used for personal acts which are felt to be strongly anti-social. Any sexual connection with blood relations for nine generations on the father's side and four on the mother's is considered incestuous; but children under the age of puberty, or, as the Lepchas say 'who are not old enough to know shame', are not considered capable of committing incest and no watch is kept on children's play. Besides blood relations sexual connection with the following relations-by-marriage is considered as incestuous: for a man to sleep with any of the women he calls 'mother-in-law' or 'daughter-in-law' (that is his wife's mother, his wife's elder sister, the wife of his wife's elder brother, and his sons' wives, the wives of his *younger* brothers, and the wives of his brothers' and sisters' sons); for a woman, to sleep with any of the men she calls 'father-in-law' or 'son-in-law' (that is her husband's father, her husband's *elder* brothers, the husband of her husband's elder sister, and her daughter's husbands, the husbands of her younger sisters, and the husbands of her brothers' and sisters' daughters). Such relationships, besides causing a year of disaster to the community, would call down a devil on to the guilty couple who would cover them with sores. Should children result from such a union they would be allowed to live, but they would either be of an evil mind or idiots, and would be short-lived.

No cases of mother-son or father-daughter incest are known of; nor does the situation occur in any mythological story. Brother-sister incest on the other hand is a motive in a great deal of Mun mythology, inevitably so, for the world and all that therein is are the children of Itpomu the Creative Mother. The origin of devils and noxious animals arises from the incest of her first two 'human' children (if I can so express it) Komsi*thing* and Narzong-*nyou*. I only heard of one case of true brother-sister incest, and that

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835 occurred in another village some generations ago. There are however two contemporary incestuous couples from Zongu whom the Lepchas classify as 'brother' and 'sister'; in both cases they were two generations removed from a common ancestor, or in our classification second cousins. These couples were shunned as irremediably unclean and contagious; they were exiled from their villages and neighbourhood; neither neighbour nor relative would visit them nor help them; when they die nobody would see to the disposal of their body, nor conduct their soul to paradise. One of the couples died after their guilty association had lasted ten years; the other couple, who came from the village of Parfok eleven years ago, are still living at a village three days' walk from Zongu; people from Zongu have seen them on their travels and recently one or two have spoken to them; so far no Lepcha has entered their house nor taken food from them.

It is considered very wicked, though the act will only affect the actual performers, for a man and his son to sleep with the same woman, or a mother and her daughter with the same man; if this is done the line will die out. This situation does however occur occasionally; there is a recent case from Pantong of a man living with mother and daughter; the trio died after three years. Another recent instance occurred at Liklyang on the other side of the river, where a woman was living with her married daughter and son-in-law; a stranger came and married the mother and subsequently slept with the daughter. Although such behaviour is very disgraceful instances of it are recounted with considerable relish, and not with the shocked embarrassment with which stories of true incest are recounted; it is a bad thing to do, but there is something rather attractive and dare-devil about it. The man who told with enormous gusto the story of one man living with mother and daughter seemed shocked and disgusted when recounting the incident of Takal's wife sleeping with Satéo and his father. The emotion which these stories of one man possessing both mother and daughter evoke seems to me to indicate that the rivalry between father and son, or father and son-in-law, so successfully muted by the Lepchas' cultural arrangements, is not entirely suppressed, and finds some gratification in dwelling on these wicked people who have displaced a potential rival.[3]

[3] It should be noted that in both these cases the man first married the mother and then afterwards slept with the step-daughter. Had he acted in the reverse order—marrying the daughter and then sleeping with her mother—the situation would have counted as fully incestuous.

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A child should know who are his *num-neu-ʒong*, that is those people with whom all sexual contact is prohibited, by the time he is nine or ten. By the time he is twelve or thirteen a boy should also know those women whom he is permitted to sleep with—usually a very much smaller number than those who are forbidden. In the case of those relations of a generation above his own—that is to say, the wives of his father's 'elder brothers', he also has to know which of these women his father has slept with beforehand, for in that case the potential partner becomes permanently forbidden. Thus for example, Chimpet can never sleep with nor inherit his 'aunt' Mrs. Datoop (Tafoor calls Datoop 'elder brother' although they are actually three generations away from a common ancestor) because several years ago his father slept with her. Since sexual relationships outside the prohibited degrees are not considered embarrassing or important, no unpleasant or guilt-ridden situation arises through the father having to inform his son about his earlier sexual life. Such subjects are rather a matter for joking, but it would be a disaster if, through ignorance, the son cut short the family line. 835

iv.

Owing to the wide application of the incest ban it often happens that a boy or girl has not a single potential spouse or unmarried love-partner in the same village; and consequently in the far greater number of cases a boy's wife has to be sought from a distant village, and a girl has to leave her home far behind when she goes to her husband. Of the sixty married women in Lingthem all but thirteen were from outside; and of these thirteen four had married newcomers to the village.[4] The remaining nine were either representatives of small *ptso*, or else their husbands were. 582

Lepchas make their first marriage extremely young. In Lingthem there was only one girl over fourteen unbetrothed, and that was Prumtu, who had a bad squint, was reputed to be lazy, and had a rough and unpleasing character. Eight boys over sixteen were unbetrothed; they were the two carpenters,[5] three mental defectives who will never be married, and three orphans. These orphans were Satéo, who was very badly lame and without property [732]

[4] For a full list of married women and their place of origin see Appendix I, a, Table II.

[5] See Chapter Four, p. 121.

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837 as several Lepchas said when the point was raised 'Who can force a grown woman against her will?' More distantly related women, such as 'aunts', may put up a certain amount of semi-playful resistance, but no rancour is felt if it is overborne.

It is considered to be an act of excessively bad taste to copulate with a heritable wife in her husband's presence, or in such situations that there is a possibility of his witnessing it. These legalised adulteries usually take place during the husband's temporary absence, or else outside the house, in the forests or fields or field-houses; these outdoor encounters are usually very brief, and have a slightly romantic flavour. Copulation inside the house has the advantage of giving longer time, but it also exposes the couple to questionable remarks and a good deal of teasing.

836 One of the results of this situation is that almost all boys and young men get their first real sexual experience and training from 864 an older married woman. Elder brothers usually explicitly instruct their younger brothers in their rights. In Lepcha theory a woman should never make direct sexual advances—the common Lepcha words for sexual activity are, like the English ones, transitive and one-directioned—but in point of fact I found that in nearly every case men had had their first real sexual experience with the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle' at the woman's direct invitation and solicitation. This is considered altogether desirable; although sexual activity is thought to be as natural and as necessary as eating, it is necessary that boys should be taught to do it properly. Thus Chudo said one day 'If I caught Chimpet (the son of his elder brother Tafoor) sleeping with my wife I shouldn't be cross at all; on the contrary I should be very pleased, for she would be teaching him how to do it properly and I would know that he was in the hands of a good teacher! On the other hand, if I caught a married man, who had a right to sleep with my wife, doing so I should reproach them for their lack of shame in doing in my presence what might better be done in my absence; if I was really angry I should tell other people about it, so that everybody might know how shameless the man had been.'

614 I have already suggested that the *ptso* was possibly earlier a geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible 835 that these permissive regulations were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the *ptso* as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such

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614 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced
● 835 intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is
[538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folklore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an unexpected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphem-
[195] ism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual
[831] activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand
[833] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are
831 centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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582 will also be his wife's elder sister and equated with his mother-in-
835 law; similarly the elder brother will not have access to or be able to marry his wife's younger sister, because she is equated with his daughter-in-law. If there was an interval between the first and second marriages both parties would have the right of access until the second *asék*; to avoid such complication it is desirable that the marriages of pairs of brothers and sisters take place as nearly simultaneously as is possible.

The semi-diagrammatic complementary relations which are set up when two brothers marry and have sons are worth tabulating. The elder brother has to respect his younger brother's wife as his 'daughter-in-law', but his son need not as he can sleep with and inherit her; the younger brother need not respect his elder brother's wife as he can sleep with and inherit her, but his son must respect her as his 'big mother'.

587 In the event of a widow being left with young children it is essential that a husband be supplied from her husband's group, and this is usually done without any sort of friction. Thus Chano, himself a childless widower, recently inherited the wife and three young children of his dead elder brother. This is the one situation in which the provision of a levirate spouse is imperative; if the widow is sterile or the children all grown up and married there is no compulsion and such women often return to their own home. Not always however; at the age of 68 the second Dorjé Lapoon married *en secondes noces* his widowed 'aunt' (actually the wife of his grandmother's brother's son) Pumri, who was then aged 73. The two had however carried on a fairly constant concubinage in the last forty years of Pumri's husband's lifetime.

The chief disadvantage of the sororate and levirate claims is that it quite occasionally happens that there is considerable disparity between the ages of the spouses, and in particular that the woman will be considerably older than the man. A relatively poor family is liable to hand on a satisfactory woman even to a boy of nine or ten; the converse seldom occurs as a man will not accept a very young girl as a second wife. During my stay in Lingthem such a case was causing considerable dispute. Kahlyeu's grandson, Chélé, at the age of ten had inherited the wife of a dead younger uncle. This girl had only been married a year before the death of her husband, and was at the time only fifteen, but the psychological difference in their ages was far greater than the real difference. Chélé was a very bright and intelligent little boy, but

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tration of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had twice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accompanied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he enjoyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. 152 831

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with his field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because he has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbourhood, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him and to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted without any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free in the choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make the request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly as if he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events. The co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights, but all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, and he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception is only made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence makes his paternity a physiological impossibility. 595 [843]

In the recent past there have only been two cases of such polyandry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above, who first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger brother'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who shared his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a lama attached to another village who was almost always away, so that the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his shared wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a wife, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless the two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as it is liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advantages for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an easy way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an extra adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife when you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband on the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor and unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that there are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of polyandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with your husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are obviously suspended. [835]

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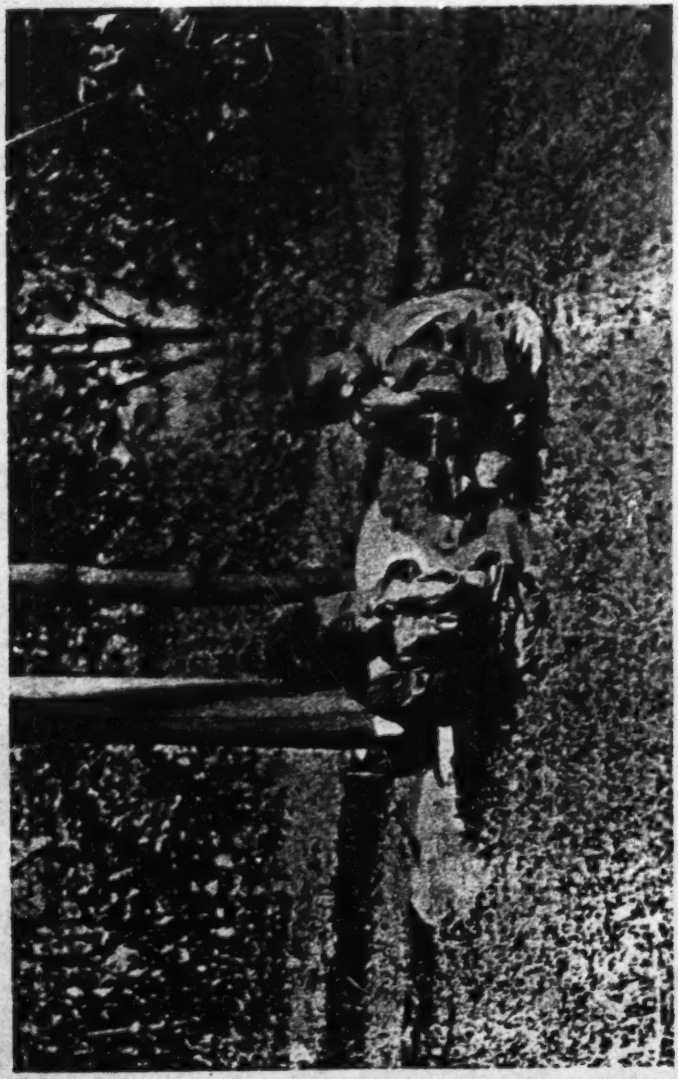

THE POT OF *CHI* FOR THE TODDLERS IS SET INTO THE GROUND WELL AWAY FROM THE GROWN-UPS

[Facing p. 272]

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The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

595 to them, whereas in a true polyandrous society each of the
837 men concerned is a legal husband, and takes his place as such at the wedding ceremonies.

● 835 It will perhaps make the situation clearer if I explain the sexual rights of a Lepcha in tabular form.

A man may sleep with:

1. The wives of all his elder brothers, and their younger sisters, whether married or not.

2. The wives of his father's younger brothers, and their younger sisters.

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that the youngest of seven brothers, for instance, whose father was himself the eldest of seven more brothers would have the legal right to sleep with no less than twelve women; but this is assuming that none of the women concerned had any younger sisters. This is, of course, a purely theoretical example and in actual practice many of the women would not normally be available since their husbands would probably be living in different villages: but even so, it means that many a man has "a home from home," so to speak, in several of the surrounding villages. In the two categories mentioned above the woman concerned cannot refuse the man's advances. He has a legal right to copulate with her, and may, if necessary, force her to submit against her will. But in addition to all these women
837 with whom a man may legally sleep, there is no moral
835 objection to his doing so with any women with whom he can trace a like classificatory relationship. But in this case the matter is entirely dependent upon the woman's willingness to co-operate: she cannot be forced to submit. In actual practice the result of all this is that in a small village there are very few women with whom a man may not amuse himself. This was certainly the case in Lingtem; but there were one or two unfortunate only sons who had, legally at all events, to confine themselves to their own wives. A great many men, however, do also have affairs with other women, of which little notice is taken, even by the husbands concerned: but

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835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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835 but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

578 152a I hope that I have now made it clear that among the Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

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I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem, so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting, however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalimpong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and becoming the usual thing among the younger generation: and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such "uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me, it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation, and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders, who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder* brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is not considered to be actually incestuous.

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837 as several Lepchas said when the point was raised 'Who can force a grown woman against her will?' More distantly related women, such as 'aunts', may put up a certain amount of semi-playful resistance, but no rancour is felt if it is overborne.

It is considered to be an act of excessively bad taste to copulate with a heritable wife in her husband's presence, or in such situations that there is a possibility of his witnessing it. These legalised adulteries usually take place during the husband's temporary absence, or else outside the house, in the forests or fields or field-houses; these outdoor encounters are usually very brief, and have a slightly romantic flavour. Copulation inside the house has the advantage of giving longer time, but it also exposes the couple to questionable remarks and a good deal of teasing.

●836 One of the results of this situation is that almost all boys and young men get their first real sexual experience and training from 864 an older married woman. Elder brothers usually explicitly instruct their younger brothers in their rights. In Lepcha theory a woman should never make direct sexual advances—the common Lepcha words for sexual activity are, like the English ones, transitive and one-directioned—but in point of fact I found that in nearly every case men had had their first real sexual experience with the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle' at the woman's direct invitation and solicitation. This is considered altogether desirable; although sexual activity is thought to be as natural and as necessary as eating, it is necessary that boys should be taught to do it properly. Thus Chudo said one day 'If I caught Chimpet (the son of his elder brother Tafoor) sleeping with my wife I shouldn't be cross at all; on the contrary I should be very pleased, for she would be teaching him how to do it properly and I would know that he was in the hands of a good teacher! On the other hand, if I caught a married man, who had a right to sleep with my wife, doing so I should reproach them for their lack of shame in doing in my presence what might better be done in my absence; if I was really angry I should tell other people about it, so that everybody might know how shameless the man had been.'

614 I have already suggested that the *ptso* was possibly earlier a geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible 835 that these permissive regulations were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the *ptso* as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such

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the ages of fifty and thirty; the remaining seven are between twenty and thirty and for them there is still some chance of producing a child, for though copulation normally starts at or before puberty the average age for bearing the first child (worked out from the women of Lingthem) is over twenty-two; there are only three instances of a woman bearing a child before she was twenty. Most exceptionally for a primitive community it was possible in Zongu to get the exact age of every individual for the following reason. It is absolutely essential for participation in all lamaist ceremonies for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year 'animal' cycle[17] they were born, for this affects birth and marriage, the diagnosis of disease, the suitability or otherwise of individual exorcists, and many other occasions in ordinary life. Also after he has completed his third (or exceptionally his fourth) cycle—that is to say when he is 36 or 48—it is obligatory for a Lepcha to make prophetic consultation as to the hazards and misfortunes which await him in the next twelve years. Although no Lepcha can state his age in years, everybody knows their 'animal' year, and with few exceptions, which can be checked by cross-reference, the number of cycles they have completed.

I have not been able to make up my mind as to the reason for the great sterility of the Lepchas. It would seem as though it were the women rather than the men who were sterile, for in the greater number of cases of a man remarrying on account of his first wife's sterility the second wife has borne him children. A suggestion put forward by some Lepchas with whom I discussed the matter, though others considered it absolutely ludicrous, is that sterility may be due to premature copulation. The Lepchas do not recognise and have no word for physical puberty, and most of them believe that the signs of female puberty (swelling of the breasts and beginning of menses) are the result of copulation and that therefore girls have to be copulated with in order that they may develop. A number of people admitted (if they were women) copulating with men when they were only ten or eleven, or (if they were men) more or less raping young girls. A number of the sterile women however emphatically deny such premature experience, and I have no reason to suppose they were lying; and anyhow on the medical evidence it seems doubtful whether such premature experience would cause subsequent sterility, though it might render childbirth more difficult.

[17] This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; see also Appendix III.

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betrothed, but of these three were mental defectives, one was a cripple, and two were carpenters just returned from the state school at Gangtok;[1] the remaining two were adopted children, and in both cases the adopting fathers said they were searching for suitable spouses. 582 584

Some of the boys and girls may have had a little sporadic sexual experience before betrothal, especially if their elder siblings of the same sex are married; but it is by no means unusual for both parties to be complete virgins at the time of betrothal. The period between betrothal and marriage is usually the time of greatest sexual adventure and promiscuity; but this naturally depends on the affection the two betrothed feel for one another and, to a lesser extent, on the distance between their two villages; a betrothed pair who are fond of one another may quite probably be sexually exclusive; where they do not get on, and particularly if there is overt hostility, they are likely to look elsewhere. 584 836

A marriage is never arranged by the parents of the child concerned; were the parents to do so either the parties would die young or the marriage would break up. In Lingthem the marriages are usually proposed by the Mandal and negotiated through the intermediary of the child's uncles and grandparents on both sides, and especially the father's elder brother, or if such a man does not exist, anyone who stands in a similar relationship. Thus, in the marriage of Datoop's children, Tafoor acted as the 'father's elder brother'; actually Tafoor is nineteen years younger than Datoop and they are four generations removed from a common ancestor (their respective paternal grandmothers were biological sisters); Datoop was an only child and Tafoor the most responsible related man of the same generation; since they are connected by females they are obviously of different *ptso*. 584

All the real marriage negotiations are carried on between two *bek-bu* (between-men) representing each side. Any experienced and tactful man with the exception of the spouse's father, who knows the correct things to say and the correct way to say them and has a sufficient vocabulary of *tang-bor* may take this rôle; in Lingthem the Mandal has performed this office for nearly every couple in the last twenty years, but in other villages a variety of people perform this rôle and the choice of *bek-bu* is a personal one dictated by the friendliness of the betrothed person and his family. In by far the greater number of cases the two children to be betrothed do not

[1] See Chapter Four, p. 121, and Chapter Six, p. 153.

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584 Betrothal does not by any means necessarily imply sexual connection between the betrothed. It does, however, usually indicate the commencement of sexual activity for both parties, and almost [833] always for the boys. The majority of Lepcha men receive their sexual initiation and education from a potential levirate spouse— 836 the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle'—and very often at the woman's direct invitation. It is a Lepcha axiom that women never make the first advances and most people repeat this statement; but a number of men when recounting their own early sex experiences tell of direct invitation and solicitation from these potential spouses; timid Jiroong indeed was at the age of fifteen as nearly raped as it is possible for a man to be by his elder brother's wife. Fathers instruct their sons as to the women they have a right to sleep with, and the women whom, though potentially heritable, they must avoid because their fathers have already slept with them.[3] Elder brothers, too, on their marriage give their younger brothers formal permission to sleep with their wives. These legitimate copulations must be practised discreetly and nearly always take place during the temporary absence of the real spouse. It is considered desirable that a boy should first sleep with a woman older than himself so as to be taught how to do it properly. For the Lepchas there is nothing incongruous in a man sleeping with a woman twice his age, and it would seem indeed that young men find older women more attractive; in the few cases where a young man has been able to choose his own bride they have always chosen elder women. It has already been remarked that fully grown younger brothers transfer many of their attitudes towards their fathers to their elder brothers; I find it, however, impossible to gauge to what extent if any the elder brothers' wives are equated with the mothers.

833 Although the great majority of men receive their sexual initiation 836 from an elder sister-in-law, a few have their first experience with contemporaries. Thus Chimpet has twice slept with a girl of his own age at Parfok at her invitation; he enjoyed the experience and would like to repeat it, but does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. Similarly Rigya was seduced at the age of fifteen by a girl of the same age in a neighbouring village;

[3] See Chapter Six, p. 153.

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it was not her first experience, though it was his. Subsequently his parents tried to betroth him to her, but she was already bespoke. 833

I unfortunately was not able to obtain as much or as precise detail on the early sexual life of women as I was of men;[4] from such information and reports as I was able to gather it would seem that potential sororate spouses play a much smaller rôle in the initiation of young girls, chiefly no doubt because they generally live some way away. When they are not deflowered by their spouse (this happens sometimes) girls would seem to start their sexual life with unrelated men, often it would appear with visitors to their village. Among the Lepchas the difficulty of talking to women on such subjects was not, as more usually happens, the jealousy of the husbands, but the fact that almost every woman from eight to eighty interpreted any sort of special attention as an attempt at seduction, an attempt which—no matter what their youth or age—they had no intention of repelling. [836]

Until the husband brings his wife home, and indeed till the birth of the first child, Lepcha men and women have complete sexual freedom at every point where this freedom does not endanger the social fabric; that is to say that all potential partners outside the stringent incest categories are permissible, provided that adultery, as the Lepchas understand the term, is not flagrant, continuous or emotionally important. After the birth of the first child adultery —that is to say connection with a woman who is not a potential wife—on the part of the father is thought to endanger the life of the child or children. Except for casual encounters at the forest or at feasts my impression is that adultery is uncommon, and that copulation with permitted partners only takes place intermittently in the absence of the actual spouses. 837

Lepcha sexual experience can be divided into four categories: legitimate copulation with one's spouse, which almost always takes place in the house; semi-legitimate copulation with potential sororate and levirate spouses, which usually takes place either in the house during the husband's temporary absence or in casual encounters in the forest or field-houses, since it is considered tactless to allow the husband to witness such copulations; thirdly, intrigues with unmarried girls which entail clandestine visits by the young man by night; and, lastly, sudden and clandestine encounters 836 837

[4] I was told the precise details of the early sex experience of at least half the men of Lingthem, but only three or four of the women. It was one of the most popular subjects of conversation among the men at the monastery feasts.

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836 which may or may not be adulterous, in the fields or forests or at
837 big feasts. The last-named are always excessively hurried and rather romantic; hurried because there is the fear of being surprised and romantic because they are unforeseen and unprepared. Occasionally to seduce an unmarried girl men will promise to give them presents of money and clothes and they will do so if the woman consents; she will either tell her parents that she has bought the new clothes, or, if this is too improbable, that she has borrowed them. If the woman refuses, men do not insist. It quite often happens that a girl will give her lover small presents—straps she has woven herself or food smuggled out of the house in her dress. It is said that presents are not given to seduce married women.

836 If unmarried and unrelated men and women wish to sleep together, the man will find out from the girl her exact sleeping position in her house; then at his own home he will wait till he can hear everybody sleeping, creep out on hands and knees, run to her home, which may be a couple of villages away, and creep in beside her. He must return to his own home before cockcrow. Normally if a man is surprised he will run away and not come back again; but it occasionally happens that these originally clandestine intrigues become socially recognised and the lover goes to live, either temporarily or permanently, with his mistress, particularly if the latter is past the age of childbearing. Thus Patek's 'elder grandmother', the sixty-six-year-old Nandjému, has as paramour a lover of the same age, a lama who travels round the country making prayer wheels; whenever he is in the neighbourhood of Lingthem he lives with the old woman as her husband. Similarly Kurma lived with his first wife, Gongyop's sister, for some years before he married her.[5] If the wife is of childbearing age she will more often go to live with her lover, especially if he is a householder in his own right; thus Tobgé's sister lived with Nahyeun, Tempa's sister with Jiroong, and Ongden's second wife with her husband for considerable periods before their marriages were legitimised.

837 Sex does not form part of the Lepcha pattern of hospitality, but if a visitor can make his own arrangements this is agreeable to all parties. In such cases once the visitor has got the girl's consent to sleep with him he learns from her the exact position of her sleeping place, and visits her as quietly as possible as soon as the rest of the company are apparently asleep.

[5] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 398–399.

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Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [836]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

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587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in
[788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No
[781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were
[836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

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587 into another *ptso*. After the presents this permission is always given automatically.

If the man accepts the girl offered the *asék* is performed one year after the death of the first wife, and the marriage usually shortly after. For second marriages the ceremonies are similar to first marriages but on a rather smaller scale; both the presents and the feasts are only about two-thirds as expensive as for first marriages. When widows remarry the ceremony is slightly altered, and the bride enters her husband's house on the first, instead of the second, day of the marriage feast. Except for sororate spouses it is considered rather difficult for a widower to get an unmarried girl for his second wife, especially if his first wife died young, for this is believed to be a sign that he is unlucky; consequently it is fairly usual for widowers to marry widows. The situation is naturally altered if a widower makes an unmarried woman pregnant.

837 587 Among the Lepchas a man can inherit the wives of all his *elder* brothers, real or classificatory, the wives of all his paternal and maternal uncles real or classificatory, provided these 'uncles' are younger than his parents but not younger than himself, and all the *younger* sisters of his wife, real or classificatory. Conversely a woman can be inherited by all her husband's younger brothers, all the sons of her husband's uncles, and all the husbands of her elder sisters, real or classificatory. With all these potentially hereditable spouses the Lepcha has the right to copulate during the lifetime of their husbands (or wives) and in nearly all cases these rights are taken full advantage of, as opportunity offers; opportunity is naturally greater with people who live in the same district, and distance often prevents men taking advantage of the right to sleep with the younger sisters of their wife, and women with the husbands of their older sisters, since they most often live in different parts of the country.

837 With the wives of their real elder brothers Lepchas have in theory a right to use force, if they will not copulate willingly; the younger brothers are considered to have contributed to the marriage price of the bride and therefore to have, as it were, a legal right. In point of fact such a use of force never arises; Lepcha women know that their husbands' younger brothers have the right of access; and casual sexual relationships are so unimportant emotionally for Lepchas that few women would think it worth while making a fuss. If the women have a real repulsion for their husband's younger brothers nothing can be done about it, for,

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it was not her first experience, though it was his. Subsequently his parents tried to betroth him to her, but she was already bespoke. 833

I unfortunately was not able to obtain as much or as precise detail on the early sexual life of women as I was of men;[4] from such information and reports as I was able to gather it would seem that potential sororate spouses play a much smaller rôle in the initiation of young girls, chiefly no doubt because they generally live some way away. When they are not deflowered by their spouse (this happens sometimes) girls would seem to start their sexual life with unrelated men, often it would appear with visitors to their village. Among the Lepchas the difficulty of talking to women on such subjects was not, as more usually happens, the jealousy of the husbands, but the fact that almost every woman from eight to eighty interpreted any sort of special attention as an attempt at seduction, an attempt which—no matter what their youth or age—they had no intention of repelling. [836]

Until the husband brings his wife home, and indeed till the birth of the first child, Lepcha men and women have complete sexual freedom at every point where this freedom does not endanger the social fabric; that is to say that all potential partners outside the stringent incest categories are permissible, provided that adultery, as the Lepchas understand the term, is not flagrant, continuous or emotionally important. After the birth of the first child adultery —that is to say connection with a woman who is not a potential wife—on the part of the father is thought to endanger the life of the child or children. Except for casual encounters at the forest or at feasts my impression is that adultery is uncommon, and that copulation with permitted partners only takes place intermittently in the absence of the actual spouses. 837

Lepcha sexual experience can be divided into four categories: legitimate copulation with one's spouse, which almost always takes place in the house; semi-legitimate copulation with potential sororate and levirate spouses, which usually takes place either in the house during the husband's temporary absence or in casual encounters in the forest or field-houses, since it is considered tactless to allow the husband to witness such copulations; thirdly, intrigues with unmarried girls which entail clandestine visits by the young man by night; and, lastly, sudden and clandestine encounters 836 837

[4] I was told the precise details of the early sex experience of at least half the men of Lingthem, but only three or four of the women. It was one of the most popular subjects of conversation among the men at the monastery feasts.

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836 which may or may not be adulterous, in the fields or forests or at
837 big feasts. The last-named are always excessively hurried and rather romantic; hurried because there is the fear of being surprised and romantic because they are unforeseen and unprepared. Occasionally to seduce an unmarried girl men will promise to give them presents of money and clothes and they will do so if the woman consents; she will either tell her parents that she has bought the new clothes, or, if this is too improbable, that she has borrowed them. If the woman refuses, men do not insist. It quite often happens that a girl will give her lover small presents—straps she has woven herself or food smuggled out of the house in her dress. It is said that presents are not given to seduce married women.

836 If unmarried and unrelated men and women wish to sleep together, the man will find out from the girl her exact sleeping position in her house; then at his own home he will wait till he can hear everybody sleeping, creep out on hands and knees, run to her home, which may be a couple of villages away, and creep in beside her. He must return to his own home before cockcrow. Normally if a man is surprised he will run away and not come back again; but it occasionally happens that these originally clandestine intrigues become socially recognised and the lover goes to live, either temporarily or permanently, with his mistress, particularly if the latter is past the age of childbearing. Thus Patek's 'elder grandmother', the sixty-six-year-old Nandjému, has as paramour a lover of the same age, a lama who travels round the country making prayer wheels; whenever he is in the neighbourhood of Lingthem he lives with the old woman as her husband. Similarly Kurma lived with his first wife, Gongyop's sister, for some years before he married her.[5] If the wife is of childbearing age she will more often go to live with her lover, especially if he is a householder in his own right; thus Tobgé's sister lived with Nahyeun, Tempa's sister with Jiroong, and Ongden's second wife with her husband for considerable periods before their marriages were legitimised.

837 Sex does not form part of the Lepcha pattern of hospitality, but if a visitor can make his own arrangements this is agreeable to all parties. In such cases once the visitor has got the girl's consent to sleep with him he learns from her the exact position of her sleeping place, and visits her as quietly as possible as soon as the rest of the company are apparently asleep.

[5] See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 398–399.

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One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the

shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment. 159x [833]

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes. [837 826]

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him after he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself. [753]

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews. [428]

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
[785] days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
● 837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
[793] complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

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amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

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159 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in
587 Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok,
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

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159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
[837] his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191] language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopōn was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding
[593] life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

[837] After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's
[762] elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re-
[682] sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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utstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
ld woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
irst encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his
romiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
hought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
loing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
oung people principally in terms of their suitability as
ossible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-
etween for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays
obody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this
luty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman,
ut merely as an experienced member of the community
hose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take
im frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he
s on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a
osition to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course
ettled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in
ases such as these certain formal arrangements are later
hought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know
he correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for
his reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
nd although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local ad- [212]
ministration which one would normally expect to find only
n a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being
lliterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
xtraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others
ecause he has to remember everything "in his heart and
elly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because
e was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great
eal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the
onastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only
nes we had were of the camp variety; and having been with
e all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of dis-
epair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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CHAPTER 11

Marriage and General Relations between the Sexes

595 CONTRARY to the reports of earlier travellers, the Lepchas (at least in Jongu) do not practise polyandry, except in very rare circumstances. It is true that their customs permit it; but in actual practice two brothers only share a wife when one is continuously away from home. The only known cases have already been noted in the chapter of personal histories. When polyandry does occur it is always, as in Tibet, what is technically known as adelphic polyandry, that is to say the co-husbands are always brothers; and in discussing the subject the idea that a woman could be married to two men who were not themselves brothers (in the full biological sense) appeared never to have entered the people's heads. Whether it would be possible for a woman to marry more than two brothers at a time I do not know, since a case of this sort has not occurred in Jongu. I imagine that [177] polyandry, such as it is in Jongu, has arisen entirely as a result of contact with Tibetans. It appears to be unknown among Lepchas of other districts, and in discussing the subject the Mandal was definitely ashamed to own that it sometimes occurred. "It is not a good thing," he said; "but it is common among Tibetans, and is sometimes a convenience when one brother is more or less permanently away from home. For this reason I have occasionally recommended, as in the case of Pichi and his brother, that a girl should be married to two brothers."

595 A distinction must, however, be drawn between marriage ● 837 and sexual relations: for while it is unusual for a Lepcha girl to be actually married to more than one man, it is common for her occasionally to sleep with all his younger brothers. The important point to note, however, is that she is not married

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595 to them, whereas in a true polyandrous society each of the
837 men concerned is a legal husband, and takes his place as such at the wedding ceremonies.

835 It will perhaps make the situation clearer if I explain the sexual rights of a Lepcha in tabular form.

A man may sleep with:

1. The wives of all his elder brothers, and their younger sisters, whether married or not.

2. The wives of his father's younger brothers, and their younger sisters.

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that the youngest of seven brothers, for instance, whose father was himself the eldest of seven more brothers would have the legal right to sleep with no less than twelve women; but this is assuming that none of the women concerned had any younger sisters. This is, of course, a purely theoretical example and in actual practice many of the women would not normally be available since their husbands would probably be living in different villages: but even so, it means that many a man has "a home from home," so to speak, in several of the surrounding villages. In the two categories mentioned above the woman concerned cannot refuse the man's advances. He has a legal right to copulate with her, and may, if necessary, force her to submit against her will. But in addition to all these women
837 with whom a man may legally sleep, there is no moral
835 objection to his doing so with any women with whom he can trace a like classificatory relationship. But in this case the matter is entirely dependent upon the woman's willingness to co-operate: she cannot be forced to submit. In actual practice the result of all this is that in a small village there are very few women with whom a man may not amuse himself. This was certainly the case in Lingtem; but there were one or two unfortunate only sons who had, legally at all events, to confine themselves to their own wives. A great many men, however, do also have affairs with other women, of which little notice is taken, even by the husbands concerned: but

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835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
● 837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

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231 have a few pairs. All goats are fed on salt, and billy goats are also given maize. Kids, and other young animals, are never killed for food.

Pigs also are raised for eating and sacrifice, but their meat is more popular and a large number are kept. They are the only animals which are generally killed for domestic eating. They are fed on the remains of *chi* after the grain has been three times soused. It is not rare for pigs and piglets to get quite drunk on this diet; there is quite a heavy mortality among them, and also occasionally among goats, who take the food by mistake, through their falling down dead drunk. The pig would appear to be a variety of the Himalayan wild pig; it is a relatively thin black animal, covered with bristles. All boars are castrated at the age of three or four months, by which time, it is said, they will have been old enough to cover the sow once. There are two reasons for thus castrating the boars; if it is not done it is said they would become savage and wander away into the forest. But there is a greater danger than [838] this; if a man should happen to eat the flesh of an uncastrated pig he would thereupon commit sodomy. This is an example of the 811 notion of *tamtoom*, an extremely important major Lepcha idea; if two events are believed to be inevitably connected, though the actual causation of the second by the first is not obvious, the second event is said to be the *tamtoom* of the first. With our logical attitude to the external world we have no proper parallel to this notion; the nearest approach would be if our common superstitions were believed to be specific and ineluctable. If for example walking under a ladder were believed to produce, say, a financial loss, this loss would be the *tamtoom* of walking under a ladder. The two acts need not necessarily be performed by or happen to the same person; when pre-natal precautions and body-marks are discussed, it will be seen that the child often suffers the *tamtoom* of his parents' actions.

838 Sodomy is strongly anti-social—it is called *nam-toak*, an act producing a year of disaster, the term which is also applied to incest—and an extremely embarrassing subject, one of the very few people don't like discussing. There is one man in the village, Takneum *youmi*, who has twice sodomised people when he was drunk and the victim asleep. In the second case, which occurred recently, the victim was old Lharibu Chujen, himself a grandfather; [684] he was not angry at the indignity offered and did not claim the recompense of a pig and five rupees and ceremonial cleansing by a

Mun to which he was entitled

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *youmi*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers. 838

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass. 231 514 539

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again. 231

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

iii

648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

This is not, however, to relegate them to the position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in the management of the household affairs. 462 [428 421 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain. 231 232 838 [262]

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose. 231 [552]

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

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192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it.
195 Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is
864 another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there [839] is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, [522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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X 159 *Amputation of 'ingzong'.*

752 'At Lik I had an "*ingzong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

X 159 When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not 839 get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur [522] attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all [158] incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

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159X
839

that given the opportunity he would do the same again; but now that he is *gyapön* and consequently in a position of some influence he has to be more circumspect.

Purchase of Boom.

'When I was at Lik I was quite prosperous, and I gave the proceeds of five maunds of cardamum, which was then 180 rupees, to buy the sacred book Boom. All the big people in the village had it in their houses and I wanted to have it too to show that I was prosperous. This book has to be read five times a year. As I cannot read I had to hire lamas to do so. I learnt to write Tibetan letters by being present during three lessons which were given to a boy who was studying to be a lama, but I cannot read.'

159X

Betrothal of Samboop and death of first wife.

'I had to act as father for Samboop and provide his marriage for him. I did this in 1930. I did not provide the marriage ceremony but my younger brother's wife came to live with him after *aséк*.

'My first wife died in the autumn of 1931 and as soon as the memorial service was finished I came to live with my second wife at Lingthem. I came as *komokmyok* and for *aséк* I only brought two maunds of millet which I bought in Mangan and killed a hen. My wife had a cow which was big with calf; we exchanged it for another one which was past milking which belonged to Tafoor, as we had to kill an ox for the wedding feast and it would be wasteful to kill a pregnant animal. I had made my wife pregnant before I *aséк*'d her. I do not believe in horoscopes; my penis is more reliable than the books. When I went to live in my wife's house I gave the old house to my brother but I reserved some of the fields for my own use. My first child was born six months after the *aséк*.'

Death of Mother.

'After I had married my Mother came and lived with me and my new wife for a little time; then she went back to live with my younger brother at her home in Lik; from there she was summoned to Lungdeum by Nimu to help look after a baby. She died in the beginning of 1933.'

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knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

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249 cardamum is planted, but every year at the flowering time a sacrifice is performed in honour of the supernatural Elaiji-*nyou*, whom the Lepchas equate with Maknyam *moong*, the devil of death. When 177 they first planted cardamum they did no ceremonies, but they got ill; then a Lepcha from outside Zongu learned the proper ritual 249 from a Nepali Jhankri (these priests are somewhat similar to the Mun) and taught it to the Lepchas of Zongu. The rather elaborate ritual has two surprising features; it is only permitted for male Mun to officiate, and the chickens, one of which is given by each household, are hung by their feet while still living during the ceremony and only afterwards killed by a small boy who hits them on the head. Both of these features are unusual in Lepcha ritual; only for the sacrifices to *Thyak-dum* and in the hunting ritual, and a couple of new exorcisms divined in the last ten years are women Mun excluded; and in no other sacrifice at all that I know of are the sacrificial animals ill-treated or made uncomfortable before they are killed. It was also from this foreign source that [84] the Lepchas learned that the presence of menstruating women would blight the plant in flower; this is a completely alien idea, for otherwise menstruating women are paid no attention to. The Lepchas have modified this notion by saying that the plant dislikes any strong smell; soap or excreta would have just the same effect; [783] they will not accept the prevalent Hindu idea of women being essentially unclean.

243 The main crops of dry rice, millet and buckwheat are grown in the temporary fields. These consist of clearings made in the forest, or rather secondary growth, for one year, and then allowed to lie fallow for seven years before being cultivated again. Nowadays all suitable land is divided up into private holdings, the landmarks consisting of big trees or streams or stones set up at irregular intervals. On the whole these clearings are not isolated; three or more households have all their portions next to one another and travel round together every year. Related households do not usually have adjacent grounds; when the land was originally distributed care was taken, it would seem, that nobody should be especially favoured; and since then the hazards of death and inheritance and split families have assigned the present neighbours.

The clearing of the land is started in the early spring; the women cut down the lower growths with their sickles, while the men climb and lop the bigger trees and saplings. Until recently the trees used to be cut down if possible, but now there is a Court

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756 776 all the personal and *ptso* gods of the sufferer and his family must also be included.

538 773 Apart from the two long 'scriptural' stories there are a vast number of shorter stories which are known by most of the older people and recounted on a variety of occasions. Nearly all of these the Lepchas call *lung-then*.[9] In its general meaning *lung-then* is the word applied to any traditional custom which cannot be neglected, such as the giving of feasts; applied to stories it means roughly 'tales of origin'. All *lung-then* end with the words 'And that is why today . . .' expressed or implied.

Lung-then can be divided into two groups: those dealing with supernaturals and human beings, and those dealing exclusively with animals. The most peculiar feature of the stories dealing with anthropomorphic characters is the preponderating rôle played by the genitalia, which are almost endowed with independent life; various semi-heroic humans and supernaturals possess genitalia of peculiar formation and characteristics, and the adventures of these organs together with the bodies to which they are attached are told in a number of tales. 841 539 One of these stories I think worth repeating, for it is, as far as I know, unparalleled in any other mythology; it is the story of the Origin of Menstruation. The story is universally known and is repeated whenever the subject is brought up. The story would appear to be capable of two interpretations, both of them congruent with the Lepcha attitude to the similarity and difference between men and women. On the one hand it indicates an extraordinary conception of the equality of men and women, for menstruation is considered almost everywhere as one of women's greatest disabilities. But it can equally well be interpreted as male envy of women and their more conspicuous physiological functions, a deeply hidden envy which can be supported by the Lepcha belief[10] that male intervention is necessary to start the physical signs of female puberty. The story is as follows:

'Originally women had their vulvas on the top of their heads. Then the menstrual blood used to flow all over their faces and it looked so unpleasant that the gods transferred the blood to men's knees; but then, when they went hunting and travelled about the country the blood used to drip everywhere, and Narzong-*nyou* saw this and was displeased thereat. Moreover the gods still did not like the vulvas on the top of the heads, so they called for volunteers

[9] Examples of these and other Lepcha stories are given in Appendix V.

[10] See Chapter Twelve, p. 315.

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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.' 841 539

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations. 538 773 [522]

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for 756

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people of Mayel would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds. There is a fairly vague tradition that menstruating women should not approach the flowering plants which bear the fruit that the people of Mayel sell—pumpkins, cucumbers, egg-plants and chillies —or the plants will rot.[3] Opinion about this prohibition was very mixed; some people, especially those who have had much contact with other races, think there may be some truth in the matter, while the more conservative, such as the Mandal, think the statement ridiculous.

The preliminary ceremonies, in those houses where they are held, are small repetitions of the big ceremony after the sowing of all the grains which must be held in each house. It is considered desirable that the same people should officiate in each ceremony, and also that the woman who sings in the spring should take the rôle of Talyeu-mu at the harvesting, and, if possible that the sacrificer should take the rôle of Mayel-mu. If the sacrificer is a woman this of course cannot be done.

The spring offerings consist of the *lafêt* sacrifice and *sakyou faat*. The food on the *lafêt* is divided into three lines of three heaps each; the centre line is for the people of Mayel, that on the right for all men's patron gods, and especially those of the house-father, that on the left for all women's patron gods, and especially those of the house-mother. The dried bird's flesh in the *lafêt* must be a special very small bird which has been killed by a virgin boy; if bigger birds are used or if the boy is not a virgin the gods will be displeased and will not eat and there will be a bad harvest. If the sacrificer is a man there is also offered a *taming* which consists of a long stick to which are attached tiny parcels containing every sort of crop and also tiny *patyoot* of *chi*; this is suspended from the roof above the officiant's head. Before the ceremony begins a song is sung in honour of the people of Mayel and then the Mun offers to them *sakyou faat* and powdered portions of the objects on the *lafêt*, calling on the people of Mayel to accept the offerings and throwing them before him or her on to the floor. The cup is constantly re-filled with *chi* with a wooden ladle by a young virgin girl who is sitting beside the Mun. After that everybody except the Mun officiating has to drink some strained *chi* from the buttered cup and eat a part of the offerings and sing songs in honour of the people of Mayel; those people who do not or cannot sing them-

[3] I am told that this is a formal rule among the Nepali, who also consider that these fruit should never be pointed at with the finger.

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152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
● 841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342 Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356 April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249 third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177] from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841 plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784 who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249 offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244] for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244] finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249 may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[68]

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms : "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

68. Report from Kalimpong.

11;Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-fast to ensure a good harvest.

Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds."[71]

The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibeto-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, *i.e.* he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 338 sq.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

 778

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore 753
eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in 782
person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the 614
same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from 842
whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who
wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank 823
copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the 823
Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo- 773
thing and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes 776
looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed [751
of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which
is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots 824]
of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth. 848

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu. 847 848 [842]

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15] 848 [753] 848 777

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
[753] bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown
● 842 herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ages of fifty and thirty; the remaining seven are between twenty and thirty and for them there is still some chance of producing a child, for though copulation normally starts at or before puberty the average age for bearing the first child (worked out from the women of Lingthem) is over twenty-two; there are only three instances of a woman bearing a child before she was twenty. Most exceptionally for a primitive community it was possible in Zongu to get the exact age of every individual for the following reason. It is absolutely essential for participation in all lamaist ceremonies for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year 'animal' cycle[17] they were born, for this affects birth and marriage, the diagnosis of disease, the suitability or otherwise of individual exorcists, and many other occasions in ordinary life. Also after he has completed his third (or exceptionally his fourth) cycle—that is to say when he is 36 or 48—it is obligatory for a Lepcha to make prophetic consultation as to the hazards and misfortunes which await him in the next twelve years. Although no Lepcha can state his age in years, everybody knows their 'animal' year, and with few exceptions, which can be checked by cross-reference, the number of cycles they have completed.

I have not been able to make up my mind as to the reason for the great sterility of the Lepchas. It would seem as though it were the women rather than the men who were sterile, for in the greater number of cases of a man remarrying on account of his first wife's sterility the second wife has borne him children. A suggestion put forward by some Lepchas with whom I discussed the matter, though others considered it absolutely ludicrous, is that sterility may be due to premature copulation. The Lepchas do not recognise and have no word for physical puberty, and most of them believe that the signs of female puberty (swelling of the breasts and beginning of menses) are the result of copulation and that therefore girls have to be copulated with in order that they may develop. A number of people admitted (if they were women) copulating with men when they were only ten or eleven, or (if they were men) more or less raping young girls. A number of the sterile women however emphatically deny such premature experience, and I have no reason to suppose they were lying; and anyhow on the medical evidence it seems doubtful whether such premature experience would cause subsequent sterility, though it might render childbirth more difficult.

[17] This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; see also Appendix III.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

164 Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas 842 call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained 731 dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

842 Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

163 Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-165 seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 842 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

where he was going to pray: the table with the cup filled with strained *chi* and the incense burner already lit was in front of him; the Mandal was seated beside him, with his wives opposite; everything was ready for the ceremony to begin. Before praying the Mun made an, as it were, introductory speech, addressed partly to the Mandal, and partly to the other people present.

The Mun: I'm a very old man, and I found the journey very trying indeed; I was tired and felt I'd like to rest, and —— a girl. I'm really a very old man now; but since you're the Mandal, and this is your house I shall do what I can. When you first sent a messenger with a load of *chi* I said 'No, I cannot go'. But you sent twice and three times and I couldn't resist you. It is true that in rank as Mandal you are above me; but in age you could be my grandson. Just as a small girl is frightened when she sees a big penis and runs away, or as a little boy is frightened when he sees a big vulva, so am I frightened of you. Nevertheless I shall do what I can. I am very sorry for you because although you have had four wives you have got no son. I think this is a source of great worry to you, but what can be done? It is not your fault; you have treated your wives well. It is not a bad deed but misfortune which makes you childless. Were I to say I could do nothing for you, you would be disappointed; shall I do this ceremony and nothing result I shall be ashamed. Nevertheless I will do what I can. You—his wives—you are my sisters and daughters: tell me, my daughters, does this husband of yours treat you badly?

The Mandal: My parents-in-law are very strict with me, and were I to do so they would punish me.

Tafoor: And then you'd take it out of your wives—or put it in —very roughly. (*General laughter*)

The Mandal (while the Mun smears butter on the cup): When I was ill it was discovered that Sabdok *moong* was troubling me, and Hit *rum* was angry, so I sent for you, because you are an old and experienced man. So please be so kind as to sacrifice properly, so that I may be troubled no longer. Please do so, whether my body is cured thereby or not.

The Mun: Were you to die, what would happen to your wives and daughter—women who are all alone?

The Mandal: Don't worry about that; in that case they can go home.

The Mun: I have already said that I am old and weak; if my sacrifice is unsuccessful, don't blame me. I take all you here to

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

According to Lepchá theory a child's life starts at the moment of conception. When the two secretions mingle[1] the soul arrives from heaven or the place of the gods (the first being the lamaist, the second the Mun, repository of unborn people); the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the flesh and blood. The first portion of the foetus to be formed is the eyes, which are completed at the end of the first month; then from round the eyes the head develops and then the rest of the body downwards. The foetus is completely human with all its organs, and even its hair, at the end of the fifth month.

Within the womb is something resembling a nipple through which the child draws nourishment; this nourishment is something like butter, and is the transmuted food of the mother, just as milk is after birth. Consequently the mother is not permanently depleted by child-bearing; none of her body has gone to feed the child.

Conception is shown by the cessation of the menses, which were instituted for that purpose. The child does not feed on the menstrual blood; menstruation is exclusively a calendar.

At the fifth month when the baby is considered fully formed the expectant parents must start observing the numerous pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is not to be born malformed, or if the mother is not to have a difficult delivery. The entering into this period of pre-natal precautions is established by a Mun *pék*-ing both parents with a bunch of elephant grass in one hand and a live fowl in the other. Both parents are equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, and in point of fact the greater number of the precautions to be observed are concerned with work which is liable to fall to a man rather than a woman. Copulation after conception has no influence on the foetus, except incestuously, which would produce a miscarriage, and may

[1] The Lepchas consider semen and the vaginal secretions to be parallel substances; they are called penis-water and vagina-water.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are [431] paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only [842] on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no pre-846 conceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to 827 their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

833 potent; trustworthy people said that when they were first married they would copulate with their wives five or six, and even eight or nine times in the course of the night, though they would then be tired the next day. I have got no comparable information from women but such statements were often made in mixed company without the women present making any comment or in any way expressing incredulity. This potency diminishes around the age of thirty, but copulation once nightly is still the general rule for married couples. Tafoor claimed that in his youth he was almost indefatiguable, but says that now he only sleeps with his wife once every three or four nights; this is the reason why he is relatively fat, for chastity induces fatness. It is believed that people accustomed to regular copulation will feel extremely uncomfortable for the first few days if for any reason their partner is removed; but it is considered that people over thirty should be able to support long periods of chastity (with the exception, some laymen say, of the lamas, who cannot do without sex even for a week).

The normal position for Lepchas copulating is for the woman to lie absolutely prone and relaxed, while the man kneels in front of her between her legs. In situations where discretion is necessary both parties lie on their sides, copulation taking place *a retro;* and in some sudden and quick encounters both parties remain standing, the woman leaning against a tree or wall. During copulation the woman lies completely motionless and relaxed, but this passivity is not equated with non-participation, and the orgasms of both 831 sexes are considered identical in nature. The Lepcha attitude to semen is practically the same as that commonly held in Europe; it is thought to be a secretion which is constantly produced and stored against use, so that a husband who has been for some while separated from his wife will have particularly large reserves. The testicles are regarded as the reservoirs of semen; they are not paid much attention to in conversation and have little rôle in the constant flow of sexual jokes. It is believed that if a man's testicles [826 hang lower than his penis he is more likely to be fertile than if the 842] contrary is the case. Semen is considered to be a rather unpleasant and soiling substance, and these characteristics are advanced as one of the major reasons against masturbation. Lepcha men consider that copulation is most enjoyable either with a very young girl or with a woman who has borne more than one child; in the latter case there is the added advantage that copulation is thought to be much less exhausting. Men with large penises are considered to give

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less 831
fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers pro- 826
curing large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their 842
husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side 548
of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of super- 556
fluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep 841
with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally 833
would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes 831
up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are 522
considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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TABLE III

FECUNDITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

842 [582]

The Lepchas are mainly exogamous: that is to say by far the greater number of women in the community have come in from outside, and by far the greater number of girls will marry into other villages. In the second column the following signs are used:

L—from Lingthem or the other smaller villages under Chala Mandal.

Z—from Zongu, the Lepcha reserve in which Lingthem is situated. Taking the average number of inhabitants per household in Lingthem —5.3—as valid for the whole area, the total population of Zongu is about 2000.

X—Lepcha from outside Zongu.

XX—Partly Sikkimese.

The question marks in this column indicate that I could not discover if the women were born inside or outside Zongu. None of the women so marked are from Lingthem, nor have any admixture of foreign blood.

It is probable that the number of children who have died in infancy is an understatement, as the Lepchas attach little emotional importance to children dying very young and may forget about them. Of the sterile women under sixty, I am certain, however, that they have never borne a child alive or dead.

sb. in columns 5 and 6 stands for a still-born child.

P. in column 7 means that the woman was pregnant in April 1937.

Date of birth	*Place of origin*	*Live children* M	*Live children* F	*Dead children* M	*Dead children* F	*Age at birth of first child*
1852	?	1	1	1	?	?
1858	L	1	?	?	?	?
1863	?	2	4	1	1	?
1864	?	?	?	?	?	?
1866	?	1	?	?	?	?
1870	Z	1	–	1	–	?30
1871	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1871	L	–	–	–	–	–
1873	L	–	1	2	–	?
1875	Z	2	1	1	–	?
1875	?	–	–	–	–	–
1877	X	–	–	1	1	?
1877	X	–	–	–	–	–
1881	Z	–	3	1	–	?
1883	Z	2	3	1	–	19
1884	X	–	–	2	–	?
1885	Z	2	3	–	–	?
1887	Z	3	1	–	–	24

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842

Date of birth	*Place of origin*	*Live children* M	*Live children* F	*Dead children* M	*Dead children* F	*Age at birth of first child*
1888	Z	3	2	–	–	20
1889	?	–	–	2	2	?
1890	L	–	–	–	–	–
1891	L	–	–	–	–	–
1891	X	–	–	–	–	–
1891	?	–	–	–	2	?20
1892	L	–	–	–	–	–
1893	L	–	3	3	3	22
1894	X	–	–	–	–	–
1896	X	1	–	sb	–	23
1896	Z	–	–	–	sb	–
1896	?	2	–	?2	?3	?25
1897	?	–	–	–	–	–
1899	Z	1	4	–	–	22
1899	L	2	1	1	–	20
1900	L	–	–	–	–	–
1900	Z	1	2	sb	–	23P
1901	Z	–	2	1	1	?25
1902	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1905	Z	2	1	–	–	19
1906	Z	1	–	?	?	?29
1906	L	1	3	–	–	17
1906	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1908	Z	1	2	–	sb	22
1909	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1909	X	–	–	–	–	–
1909	Z	–	3	–	–	22
1909	X	–	2	1	–	21
1909	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1911	Z	–	1	–	–	25
1911	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1911	L	–	–	–	–	P[1]
1912	X	1	–	–	–	22
1912	L	–	–	–	–	–
1912	X	1	–	–	–	20
1912	XX	1	–	–	–	22
1914	Z	1	–	sb	–	20P
1914	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1915	Z	(widow—unknown recently arrived)				
1918	L	–	–	–	–	–
1919	Z	–	–	–	–	–
1920	Z	–	–	–	–	–

[1] This woman was subsequently successfully delivered of a boy.

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became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons. These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

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778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried
842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the
794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country.
[212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably

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159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

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the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* —Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848 closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595 case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848 able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842] even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553] secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753] of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analysis]

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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864 In the same way that a boy usually has his first sexual
833 experience with a woman years older than himself, so is a girl
842 generally first seduced by some older man. A number of women told us that they started their sexual life at the age of ten; and in every case they had their first experience with a grown man. The people do not see anything offensive in this; and we were unable to convince them that the custom is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the very high rate of sterility among the Jongu women. Nothing short of a complete examination by a gynæcologist would definitely establish this point; but it is significant that the several sterile women with whom we were on sufficiently intimate terms to discuss the subject all owned to having been initiated into sex at a very early age, and by men years older than themselves.

833 Except when a young boy is seduced by some elder relation a woman never makes the suggestion to copulate, although she may hint indirectly that she is not unwilling to submit. When a youth is interested in any particular girl he will generally have his first encounter with her out in the forest, or in some other secluded spot; but once relations between the two have been established it is usual for him to visit her at home. He will, if necessary, travel several miles in the dead of night for this purpose. The girl will previously explain the topography of the house to her lover and describe to him the exact place where she sleeps, so that when the time comes he may enter the house silently and make straight for her bed. He will usually creep in on all fours, stepping over the other sleeping people carefully, so as not to wake them. Should he be discovered he will at once run out of the house, and will not return that night; but if the pair are not disturbed it will generally be about two in the morning before the boy takes his departure. He will generally not leave his own home until everyone is asleep, so that he can depart unnoticed. Should the parents of the girl get to know what is happening they will not usually be angry or display any other emotion. Tafoor said that he would not mind in the least if he

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knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 14

A Letter to the Maharaja of Sikkim

YOUR HIGHNESS,

You asked me to let you know what I thought about the Lepchas when I got back from Jongu; and the following notes are in amplification of the talk we had in Gangtok last August. If I have been somewhat outspoken in my criticisms I know you will forgive me because, like Your Highness, I, too, find these a very attractive and lovable people; and any suggestions I have to make are only offered with a view to helping them.

The most important thing is, I think, to discover why they are so rapidly dying out. You yourself told me that it is very [842] generally believed in Sikkim that the extremely high rate of sterility among the Lepchas is due to the practice of several brothers sharing a wife. It may be that this has some bearing on the matter, but there is no scientific evidence to support such a theory. Nor, I think, would any modern biologist agree that constant intermarriage for several generations within a small group results in sterility. In refutation of this theory I need only instance the Gurkhas (some tribes of which practise cross-cousin marriage as a regular custom), who are, as you are well aware, extremely prolific. But, in any case, the Lepchas in Jongu do not permit cross-cousin marriage; nor, indeed, do they marry relatives of any sort, except those so distant as to be no relatives at all. I think that the custom of very young girls cohabiting with grown men undoubtedly causes a certain amount of sterility, but it is insufficient by itself to account for the very low birth-rate in Jongu. It is, I think, fairly obvious that some of the men, too, are sterile; but this again is only a minor factor.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tration of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had twice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accompanied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he enjoyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does not want to marry the girl because he does not like her. 152 831

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with his field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because he has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbourhood, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him and to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted without any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free in the choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make the request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly as if he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events. The co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights, but all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband, and he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception is only made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence makes his paternity a physiological impossibility. 595 [843]

In the recent past there have only been two cases of such polyandry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above, who first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger brother'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who shared his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a lama attached to another village who was almost always away, so that the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his shared wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a wife, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless the two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as it is liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advantages for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an easy way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an extra adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife when you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband on the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor and unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that there are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of polyandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with your husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are obviously suspended. [835]

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coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away. On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyoú faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

842 According to Lepcha theory a child's life starts at the moment of conception. When the two secretions mingle[1] the soul arrives
843 from heaven or the place of the gods (the first being the lamaist, the second the Mun, repository of unborn people); the father's semen provides the bones and brain, the mother's vaginal secretions the flesh and blood. The first portion of the foetus to be formed is the
843 eyes, which are completed at the end of the first month; then from round the eyes the head develops and then the rest of the body downwards. The foetus is completely human with all its organs, and even its hair, at the end of the fifth month.

Within the womb is something resembling a nipple through which the child draws nourishment; this nourishment is something like butter, and is the transmuted food of the mother, just as milk is after birth. Consequently the mother is not permanently depleted by child-bearing; none of her body has gone to feed the child.

842 Conception is shown by the cessation of the menses, which were instituted for that purpose. The child does not feed on the menstrual blood; menstruation is exclusively a calendar.

843 At the fifth month when the baby is considered fully formed the expectant parents must start observing the numerous pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is not to be born malformed, or if the mother is not to have a difficult delivery. The entering into this period of pre-natal precautions is established by a Mun *pék*-ing both parents with a bunch of elephant grass in one hand and a live fowl in the other. Both parents are equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, and in point of fact the greater number of the precautions to be observed are concerned with work which is liable to fall to a man rather than a
843 woman. Copulation after conception has no influence on the foetus,
833 except incestuously, which would produce a miscarriage, and may

[831] [1] The Lepchas consider semen and the vaginal secretions to be parallel substances; they are called penis-water and vagina-water.

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843 [833]

be continued right up to birth; in the last weeks it is generally performed *a retro* lying on the side.

It would be tedious to give a complete list of the pre-natal precautions to be observed, but the following are some typical examples. If either of the parents are engaged in making a fence he or she must do the whole work by himself; otherwise the baby cannot be born properly. The father must not take any fish out of a trap in the river or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Neither parent must lock up anything except their own box or the child will not be able to be born until what is closed is opened; even the house door must not be fastened. Neither parent may eat animals which have met their death by accident or by being killed by a wild beast; the father must never look at a recently killed animal; he can kill animals but must run away at once. The father must not touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle; should he do so the mother and child are liable to die, but this can be prevented if a bridle is kept in the house which can be *pék* over the woman during delivery. If either parent should be weaving a mat or cloth he or she must never quite finish it but must leave a little bit over. The mother must not eat any joined fruit such as a double banana or the child's toes will be webbed. Neither parent must stick poles into the ground or tie knots or drive in nails or put small stones into the cracks between bigger stones when building a wall; all of these prevent proper delivery. Expectant parents must not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will be born dead; in the case of a solar eclipse both parents must stop in the house all day. If a child has recently died the paths it used to walk in and its house must be avoided; and as a general precaution it is better to avoid the paths and houses of all recently dead people. Expectant parents must not watch a dog being born; if they do so the child will have one eye smaller than the other. If expectant parents move a sacred image the child will be born dumb. Should either parent look at or kill a field-mouse or should they eat rice which has stuck to the bottom of the cooking-pot the placenta will not descend. There are a very great number of prohibitions similar to those listed above; the second half of pregnancy is a period of constant watchfulness for both parents.

There is a disease called *tamdit* which afflicts expectant parents; one loses all appetite while the other eats voraciously. This does not affect all people and may strike either sex.

The sex of a child is fixed after five months; and one can tell

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

whether the infant is a boy or a girl by the fact that a boy is always higher in the womb. The sex can also be diagnosed by a Mun at about eight months when the Mun *péks* the body of an expectant mother.

The sex of a child is, however, not really fixed; its sex can be changed for that of another child in the womb either with the consent of the parents or surreptitiously. This is done very simply by a pair of expectant fathers or mothers exchanging any article. Tafoor's two middle daughters should really have been boys; when his wife was carrying the eldest daughter who was then a son, a lama from some way away asked him to change; Tafoor refused, whereupon the lama surreptitiously exchanged tassels on his rosary. The result was that a daughter was born, but with a boy's character which will continue until she has slept with a man; she climbs trees, kills birds, makes bows and arrows and has a large frame more like a boy than a girl; she is indeed considerably taller than her brother Chimpet, who is two years older. The second boy-in-the-womb Tafoor exchanged voluntarily with his younger brother Chudo, who had already had one daughter and whose wife was pregnant with another daughter; the exchange was successful for both parties. This exchange, however, cannot be performed if the two pregnant mothers are blood relations. This belief, which is universally held, is, I think, another excellent illustration of the Lepcha attitude towards the correlation of sex and temperament; sex is a question entirely of the primary sexual characteristics and nothing more.

Quickening of the foetus is merely diagnosed as a sign of life; but if a child moves a great deal inside the womb the forecast is that when it is grown up he or she will be excessively lascivious.

Miscarrying is caused by a devil Sor *moong* and is an hereditary sex-linked disability (as indeed is difficult delivery). As soon as a woman has miscarried she, unless she is seriously ill, and at all events her husband, must carry the foetus down to the river accompanied by a Mun who will there *pék* the couple with a bunch of elephant grass to which coloured threads, two rings, a rupee and a turquoise have been attached. On returning home an animal must be sacrificed and the Mun will *pék* the couple again. The wife is considered 'unclean' after a miscarriage and must be well washed and fed on chicken soup and butter. Ordinarily after the sixth month of pregnancy the mother will be *pék* by a Mun to avoid miscarriage as a routine precaution. If a woman who has mis-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops. [847] Except in the theoretical case of a girl being delivered of a bastard in the forest and there killing it, infanticide is not permitted for any reason whatsoever; neither monsters nor deformed infants nor even incestuously begotten children will be killed.

844 To procure easy delivery a Mun will offer two chickens to Sor *moong* in the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy. Easy or difficult labour is considered to be a hereditary quality; a woman who after easy deliveries suddenly has a difficult one is considered either to have helped a woman in child-birth who had difficult labour, or to have eaten some of the food of such a woman. If labour is difficult a Mun and lama will be called in to find out the cause of this, which is almost certain to be the breaking of some pre-natal taboo, probably by the father. If this is discovered by divination the appropriate steps will be taken to remove the *tamtoom* by the undoing or unlocking that which had been incorrectly completed [845] or locked. It may be noted that it is impossible to procure an abortion or still-birth by the intentional breaking of pre-natal precautions; any such act which can kill the child will also kill the mother.

About a month before delivery is expected some specially strong *chi* is prepared and put aside; this must on no account be touched by anybody until the third day after delivery, when it is served at the birth feast; and, for a month after, it is given as a specially strengthening food to the newly delivered mother. Apart from this no special preparations are made for birth, which takes place in the husband's house; all the members of the household are present at the birth, but no strangers unless a Mun or lama has to be called in to give his services to help a difficult delivery. The mother is delivered in the kitchen; a rope is suspended from the ceiling to which she clings, squatting; she may be helped by the father or parents-in-law or anybody who knows how, who will squat behind and press on the woman's breasts and belly. As soon as the baby has appeared the cord is cut and the part attached to the baby tied up; then the baby is washed in luke warm water, wrapped in a cloth, and given the breast. Anybody who knows how can cut the navel-cord—the mother or father or anybody else who has

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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time as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own 843
house-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must not tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a bag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended from his shoulder happens to break he must on no account pick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills out. He must not eat animals which have met their death by accident, or which have been killed by some beast of prey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any kind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if he does so he must run away at once and let others deal with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap; nor touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is somewhat unexpected in a completely horseless community), or both the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by any chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period of his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by keeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826]
child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period. If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [753]
would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

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child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843
father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826
the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774]
full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and
for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844
and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event. It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong-Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

● 843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops. [847] Except in the theoretical case of a girl being delivered of a bastard in the forest and there killing it, infanticide is not permitted for any reason whatsoever; neither monsters nor deformed infants nor even incestuously begotten children will be killed.

844 To procure easy delivery a Mun will offer two chickens to Sor *moong* in the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy. Easy or difficult labour is considered to be a hereditary quality; a woman who after easy deliveries suddenly has a difficult one is considered either to have helped a woman in child-birth who had difficult labour, or to have eaten some of the food of such a woman. If labour is difficult a Mun and lama will be called in to find out the cause of this, which is almost certain to be the breaking of some pre-natal taboo, probably by the father. If this is discovered by divination the appropriate steps will be taken to remove the *tamtoom* by the undoing or unlocking that which had been incorrectly completed [845] or locked. It may be noted that it is impossible to procure an abortion or still-birth by the intentional breaking of pre-natal precautions; any such act which can kill the child will also kill the mother.

About a month before delivery is expected some specially strong *chi* is prepared and put aside; this must on no account be touched by anybody until the third day after delivery, when it is served at the birth feast; and, for a month after, it is given as a specially strengthening food to the newly delivered mother. Apart from this no special preparations are made for birth, which takes place in the husband's house; all the members of the household are present at the birth, but no strangers unless a Mun or lama has to be called in to give his services to help a difficult delivery. The mother is delivered in the kitchen; a rope is suspended from the ceiling to which she clings, squatting; she may be helped by the father or parents-in-law or anybody who knows how, who will squat behind and press on the woman's breasts and belly. As soon as the baby has appeared the cord is cut and the part attached to the baby tied up; then the baby is washed in luke warm water, wrapped in a cloth, and given the breast. Anybody who knows how can cut the navel-cord—the mother or father or anybody else who has

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experience and a small knife. Babies are not slapped to make them 844
cry or take in air; they do so, it is said, automatically. Nothing is done to the mother's breasts to induce lactation. Considerable anxiety is felt, especially by the father, if the afterbirth is long in descending; if there is a delay the severed and tied navel-cord is attached to the mother's toe and she is then *pék* by a Mun. As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it and the cord are rammed into a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. Somebody not too nearly connected with the delivered parents will take this and either throw it into the river or fasten it high up on a tree out of the way of insects and animals; for should it be eaten the child will suffer from skin eruptions. Formerly the afterbirth used to be buried but now this is no longer done; for if it is buried in wet [753]
ground the child will get eye disease, if in cultivated ground the crops will be spoilt. One or two people said that in certain family lines the afterbirth is still buried, but I could not get any concrete examples of this practice.

If after the birth the blood does not flow freely a blood clot will be formed; to remove the clot the mother is given hot soup and drinks, and fish boiled in butter; if the clot does not come down she will die.

If labour is difficult a fowl and a goat should be sacrificed; the mother must eat the fowl by herself. The goat's heart, lungs, and liver must be boiled and hashed and mixed with rice and offered to the gods and devils; the rest of the meat belongs to the officiants.

It is believed that with breach presentation it is impossible for the 845
baby to be born alive and it is rare that the mother should survive this; it is due to one of the parents having tied up a packet at one end to carry food and then, instead of taking the food out of the mouth, to have taken it out of the tied end. It is good if a new-born baby has hair, but should a child be born with a tooth in its head (a thing unheard of) that baby will be an incarnate devil. It will be reared, but when it grows up its thoughts and curses will be able to kill people. No cases are known of a child born in a caul; if it did occur it would be lucky. A child is unaffected by being born with a strangulating cord; it is the *tamtoom* of one of its parents having twisted a rope or string round their neck in the later stages of pregnancy. Birth-marks vary in their significance according to their place and colour. Big splodgy birth-marks show that in its former incarnation the child was a cow; red marks on the hands and arms that the child was formerly a killer of men—a soldier

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597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and
[766] child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth
[783] feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844] children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586] uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553] and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

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751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

● 844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

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the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

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224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
[832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
[151] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843
father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826
the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774]
full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and
for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844
and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to
investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was
very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he
went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event.
It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

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844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

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843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops.

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

597 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be
853 little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another. [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

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844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also [843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the [753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. [184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

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868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
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252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong
● [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

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CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

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597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the
[766] body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous
864 adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are
[783] scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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846 of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are [431] paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only [842] on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no pre-846 conceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to 827 their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 846 751 [856]

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name. This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone 846 else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, 846 moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not 862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake, however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the third day after its birth. People do not make any remark on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to congratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remarking upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is considered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence. It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three days following the birth of her child, but after this she may, if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them) it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation.

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.
[856] By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these 848
gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth.

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it 847
is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards 848
in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only [842]
abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu.

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and 848
relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, [753]
or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of 848
them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15] 777

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops. [847] Except in the theoretical case of a girl being delivered of a bastard in the forest and there killing it, infanticide is not permitted for any reason whatsoever; neither monsters nor deformed infants nor even incestuously begotten children will be killed.

844 To procure easy delivery a Mun will offer two chickens to Sor *moong* in the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy. Easy or difficult labour is considered to be a hereditary quality; a woman who after easy deliveries suddenly has a difficult one is considered either to have helped a woman in child-birth who had difficult labour, or to have eaten some of the food of such a woman. If labour is difficult a Mun and lama will be called in to find out the cause of this, which is almost certain to be the breaking of some pre-natal taboo, probably by the father. If this is discovered by divination the appropriate steps will be taken to remove the *tamtoom* by the undoing or unlocking that which had been incorrectly completed [845] or locked. It may be noted that it is impossible to procure an abortion or still-birth by the intentional breaking of pre-natal precautions; any such act which can kill the child will also kill the mother.

About a month before delivery is expected some specially strong *chi* is prepared and put aside; this must on no account be touched by anybody until the third day after delivery, when it is served at the birth feast; and, for a month after, it is given as a specially strengthening food to the newly delivered mother. Apart from this no special preparations are made for birth, which takes place in the husband's house; all the members of the household are present at the birth, but no strangers unless a Mun or lama has to be called in to give his services to help a difficult delivery. The mother is delivered in the kitchen; a rope is suspended from the ceiling to which she clings, squatting; she may be helped by the father or parents-in-law or anybody who knows how, who will squat behind and press on the woman's breasts and belly. As soon as the baby has appeared the cord is cut and the part attached to the baby tied up; then the baby is washed in luke warm water, wrapped in a cloth, and given the breast. Anybody who knows how can cut the navel-cord—the mother or father or anybody else who has

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198 —Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847 are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

614 gods of the *ptso*; but the greater number of lamas feel no meta-
776 physical qualms and bear their full share in this Mun ceremony. The *ptso* supernaturals are always invoked by the Mun when they perform a ceremony for the benefit of a particular individual. In the Mun theogony all the *ptso* supernaturals are friendly and there is no rivalry between the groups; it is thought that the more populous the *ptso* the stronger the guardian supernaturals.

The *ptso* supernaturals descend, as it were, from father to son; women have other different supernaturals which descend from mother to daughter; with the consequence that brothers and sisters have different guardian supernaturals, although all children are counted as members of their father's *ptso*. (An exception must be
● [848] made in the case of unacknowledged bastards, who are considered to be members of the *ptso* of their mother's father.) These women's supernaturals are invoked, along with numberless others, at the Mun ceremonies after sowing and harvesting, and special sacrifices are made in their intention in the case of illness. Special sacrifices are also made to them at the time of the marriage feast, and the questioning of the bride about her special supernaturals is one of the most formalised incidents in the marriage ceremonies.
776 There are certain other supernaturals which are common to all women; these include Ami *rum*, the god of riches, and Katong Fi who visits women in their dreams and copulates with them at the time of their menses; this dream-copulation is meant to continue throughout life, and should a month pass without this dream it means that the woman is shortly going to die. Parallel to these exclusively female supernaturals are Pong *rum*, and his wife Shing *rum*, the patrons of hunting, who are worshipped exclusively by men. There are also other supernaturals who are as it were patrons of each sex respectively, and yet others who belong to the family, as distinct from the *ptso*. Among the countless supernaturals with which the world is filled these personal and private ones have no great significance; along with numberless others—the enumeration of gods in a Mun sacrifice may take two or three hours—they are prayed to for the blessings of long life, many children, and prosperity, but their power is not considered to be great.

614 Except as an exogamic classification the *ptso* is now functionless. Although members of the different *ptso* are scattered, not only throughout Zongu, but wherever Lepchas live, the triennial unions only gather those members who live near one another; to the best of my knowledge there has never been, nor has there ever

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viii

848 It occasionally happens that a woman becomes pregnant before she is *aték*'d, or when either the youth or the absence of her husband renders legitimate paternity impossible. These accidents are considered deplorable, but the effect is very different according to whether the woman is married or not; if she is married the bastardy is a private affair; if she is not it threatens the whole community with a storm of hail which will destroy the harvest. The danger of these illegitimate pregnancies apparently only arise in the later stages;[14] grown men, especially widowers, often impregnate their future wives and only perform *aték* in the third month of pregnancy (under these circumstances parents will usually give their daughters to widowers) and they do not have to perform the ceremony of *thip-song* which is required for bastards. It also happens very occasionally that a boy and girl will present their elders with a *fait accompli* through the girl's pregnancy; this also does not involve the ceremony.

The *thip-song* ceremony which has to be performed for illegally pregnant women is costly and elaborate. An ox, or, failing that, two pigs have to be sacrificed by a Mun, and a long and involved ceremony performed by the lamas. This ceremony should properly last two days, and all the village should be feasted, to recompense them for their harvest which the hail would spoil. If the father of the child is unmarried, and wishes to marry the girl, he pays for this ceremony, after which the *aték* is performed in the normal manner. If for any reason he cannot or will not marry the girl his group should offer a substitute husband. Should the father be a married man this paternity is a cause of considerable scandal; all his family group, as well as his wife's, will turn against him and upbraid him publicly; they may even shame him by paying for the *thip-song* ceremony to be performed. It is possible however that his first wife may be agreeable to his *aték*-ing the girl and taking her as his second wife.

If a man acknowledges his paternity but refuses to marry the girl or provide an alternative husband for her the girl's family will pay for the *thip-song* ceremony, in which case the father will have no claim on the child; he will be obliged however to present the

[14] There is, as far as I know, no formulated rule on the subject; but it seems probable that, on the analogy of the pre-natal precautions which only have to be observed in the second five moons of pregnancy, it is only when the bastard is fully formed, at the end of five moons, that it becomes socially dangerous.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth. 848

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu. 847 848 [842]

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[18] 848 [753] 848 777

[18] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
[753] bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's
842 subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

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But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated; Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *piso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159
a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763
had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159
house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764
now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159
even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848] ●
was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

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say nothing about it. I have already stated that no stigma attaches to an illegitimate child as such; but when a woman, in the words of one of our interpreters, "goes in for bastarding" it is necessary for the man concerned to perform a ceremony known as *Tip-song*. It should be done as soon as it is known that the girl is pregnant and consists in sacrificing an ox or pig, which, together with an assortment of various kinds of grain, is offered to the birth-god by a Mun. There is also a small Lama ceremony, for which, however, only one small *torma* is needed. For very rich people the ceremony and its attendant festivities may last as long as two whole days, during which time the offerings are consumed by the assembled company.

It sometimes happens that a man refuses to do *Tip-song*, in which case the girl's parents will themselves make arrangements to carry it out; but the man will eventually be made to pay fifteen rupees and a pig. This payment is known as *Soo*, which is the word used also for the special food provided for a woman at the time of her confinement. *Tip-song* is often, but not necessarily, followed by formal betrothal and marriage, but if the man refuses to carry it out he has no claim on the child. Once the Tip-song gifts have been given the man acknowledges the child as his own and is responsible for its upbringing. He has, however, no claim on the mother unless he follows the *Tip-song* up with betrothal and marriage. Karma's mother gave birth to an illegitimate child after the death of her husband. But since the father denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter, the *Tip-song* was provided by her relations.

It should be noted that the purpose of the ceremony and its attendant gifts is not to legitimise the child's position in the community but to avert the damage to the crops of the girl's whole village by hail, which would otherwise ensue.

In cases where a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child by a man who is already married, his wife's consent is first necessary before he can do *Tip-song*. If she refuses her

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If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848 closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595 case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848 able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842] even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553] secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753] of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chu*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with

1: Gorer J-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

husband, but can take as companion any other member of her 574
husband's family except her father-in-law; very often these visits are the means of producing further marriages between the groups.

The husband practically does not change status at all through 593
marriage. Unless there have been premature deaths in the family he is still a very minor member of the household; he has a wife to work with him, but he has if anything to work harder now that he is a more responsible person. There are no outward signs of any sort which will show if a person is married or not. Marriages take place, as has been said, when the parties are still very young, and there is usually a considerable lapse of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Only two women in Lingthem bore [844]
children before they were eighteen and the greater number usually had their first child somewhere around the age of twenty. These preliminary years are passed in the married couple getting accustomed to one another and setting up the pattern of mutual rights and duties on which Lepcha affection is founded. It is extremely [586]
uncommon and is considered very disreputable for a husband and wife who have children to separate, or even to show marked preference for anybody other than their own spouse. Such behaviour is stigmatised as shameless.

At the wife's first pregnancy the young couple acquire greater 592
importance and responsibility and the second half of the pregnancy 851
is, as has been described, a period of great care and watchfulness for both parties. With the birth of the child the couple become more important; now they are really part of the village and are carrying on the family line, and as a sign of this their names are changed and also their mode of address to their nearer kinsmen. The father and mother are called after their child—father of X [553]
and mother of X—and all the members of the generation above them are called grandfather and grandmother out of compliment to the child, and members of the same generation, especially if older, may be addressed as father or mother, though this latter is optional. But unless death has intervened they are still a minor part of the 592
household; they continue working harder than ever now they have children to bring up, and it is only when their own family is growing up that they in their turn become the head of the household or one of the more important members of it. As the man's father gets older he gives over more and more responsibility to his eldest son, even possibly having the property registered in this son's name;

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551 784

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

601 curious anomaly may be noted. There is only one word to denote both son and daughter; and similarly one word has to do duty for both one's younger (but not elder) brother and sister. When it is required to distinguish the sex of these individuals it is necessary to add the prefix denoting, respectively, male or female. In actual practice this is rarely necessary, except when talking to strangers, who might be expected not to know the composition of any particular family.

In a small community such as Lingtem nearly everybody is able to trace some sort of relationship to everyone else. This is particularly easy, for instance, when a man refers to a person whom we should describe doubtfully as a "cousin several times removed" as his brother. It is, however, extremely confusing to a stranger of an alien culture; but in view of the fact that pedigrees are common property and that there are no skeletons in the Lepcha's cupboards, no such difficulty arises amongst the people themselves. Until one gets used to the system one naturally thinks of two "brothers," for instance, as being sons of the same father. It is, of course, quite possible that they may be; but on the other hand it is equally possible that one is the son of a man whose mother is descended from the other's great-grandmother's sister! But all these details are common property in the village and no confusion arises. To explain them here would need a whole series of complicated charts, the sight of which would undoubtedly cause the reader to lay down this book in disgust. That, however, is a risk I am not willing to take: but in any case, such things are of interest only to experts; and even they, to judge by the uncut pages in the books of some of my friends, are sometimes human!

● 852 We may now consider the subject of Lepcha home life in general. It will be convenient to start with babies and children, in reading the account of which due allowance should be made for my bachelor prejudice and ignorance!

Three days after a child is born its head is smeared with a mixture of butter and soot, the latter scraped from the family cooking pot. This is believed to hasten the closing

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 354]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556 562

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852 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time.
[556] He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third
562 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up
[824] with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all
562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall
773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the
[787] child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's
553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are
551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

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mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake, however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the third day after its birth. People do not make any remark on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to congratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remarking upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is considered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence. It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three days following the birth of her child, but after this she may, if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them) it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

●852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

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PLATE I

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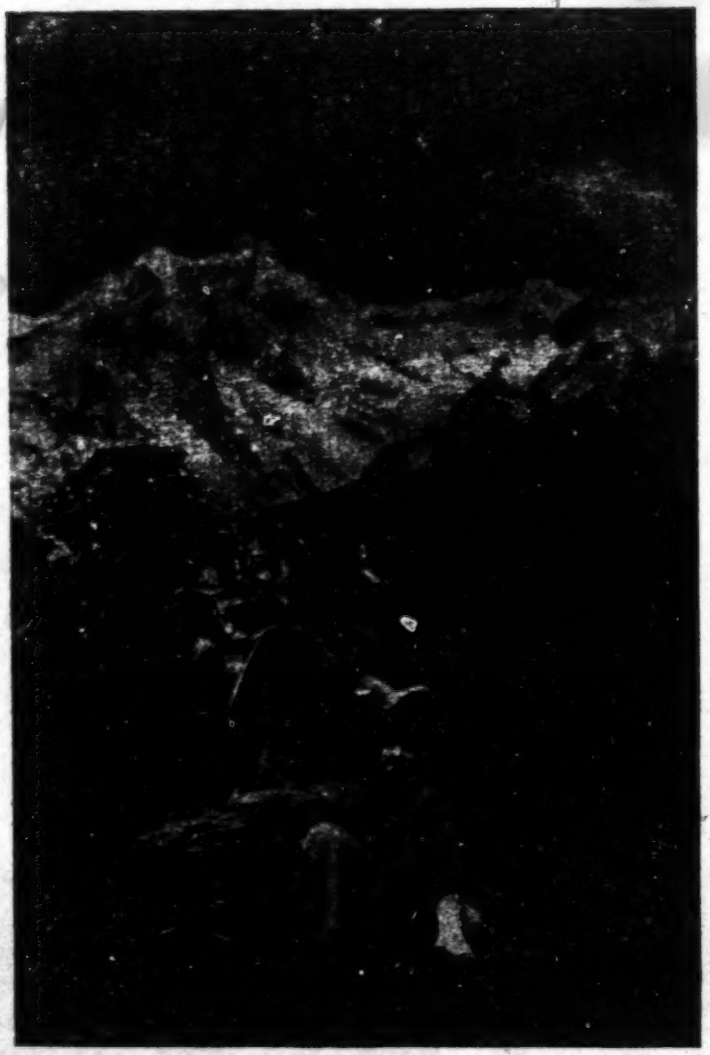
853



MRS. TAFOOR NURSING HER YOUNGEST DAUGHTER:
BEHIND KINCHENJUNGA

[Frontispiece]

[Facing p. 5]

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

597 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be
853 little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

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597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and
[766] child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth
[783] feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name. This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone 846 else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, 846 moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not 862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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Jiroong, who has extraordinarily precise memories of his infancy said that 'he was three when his sister was born. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth, which he witnessed and which frightened him very much. He was told that the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*. He was weaned in two ways; his mother's breasts were smeared with excrement, and a sister of his father took him away to her home and told him he must not cry because "Sang-rong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him". He remembers vividly that for a week he cried every night for his mother's breast, and then resigned himself to doing without. For some time his aunt looked after him, sometimes keeping him with her at her house, and sometimes going to his home and sleeping with him.' In the same way Tobgé's wife had sent her son, aged a little over two, to live with her parents in their village a day's journey away. Since she was not pregnant again this conduct was disapproved of; it was considered to be a further illustration of Tobgé's irresponsibility and her immorality. 862

Normally a child is only suckled by its mother, but if the mother dies, or for any other reason becomes incapable of suckling the child, it may be suckled by another woman whom the child will call 'mother', or occasionally by the grandmother. A child does not have more than one nurse at a time, and would not be given a feed by a lactating woman during the mother's temporary absence. The reason given for this is that in taking another woman's milk the child would contract a debt which it would never be able to repay; and this debt would be a burden to it after its own death. 853

It is a general Lepcha belief that any woman who has once borne a child can produce milk spontaneously when a baby sucks; and this seems to be borne out by the fact that on occasion if the mother dies the grandmother will suckle the grandchild. I myself saw Kurma's mother-in-law suckling her granddaughter, though it was over twenty years since she herself had borne her last child. Some women too can produce milk without having borne a child; at first this milk is indigestible for the infant, but it is subsequently perfectly all right. If the mother dies the husband's breasts will very often swell; but they only produce a sort of lymph and not proper milk. As far as my observations and inquiries go it seems clear that Lepcha women lactate with far more facility than European women. 853 147 827

A youngest child will continue sucking until the mother's milk dries up, or until the child 'becomes ashamed'; this may continue 853

853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them stand-
854 ing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

[753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

●853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
[231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
[766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
[515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
[854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them standing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the 854 favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

[753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the [826]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

856 upper. Should the contrary occur it will indicate that the child is a victim of the evil supernatural Sumoo Thor. When such people
826 grow up all their domestic animals will fail; if the child is a girl her husband will die young and she will be left an early widow; if a boy all his children will die in infancy. There is no unanimity as to whether parents would inform their children when they grow older of such evil prognosis; the general opinion is that though parents themselves would not tell the children the elder siblings are liable to know of the fact and to mention it in the course of family squabbles. Tobgé's sister is believed to have Sumoo Thor as she has pointed teeth in the front of her lower jaw. People have teased her about this but she has replied that she 'doesn't care, and anyhow her odd teeth are the result of a *tamtoom* and have nothing to do with Sumoo Thor.' There is nothing to do to avert the misfortunes from teeth arising in the wrong place; it is the destiny following a child from its previous incarnation. Similarly moles above the level of the eyes in boys and below them in girls portray the presence of Sumoo Thor; moles in the contrary positions are lucky.

A baby should not be given either bear or frog to eat or it will be late in speaking. You can tell from the way a child cries when it is six months old if it is going to be dumb or not.

854 Until children start walking they do not usually have clothes at all; in the house they are wrapped up in warm folded cloths, not so tightly as to restrict their movements, and usually lie on their back on the floor or raised bed-partition. For the first month or six weeks and occasionally longer they are carried in the arms; after that they are carried on the back of a parent or elder sibling. There are two positions in which the child is held on the back; the most usual is a semi-foetal one with the enveloping cloth catching the child under the knees which are folded up to the body so that the child only touches its carrier from the knees to the feet and with the upper part of the body. Occasionally, however, children, especially when they have passed one year, are fastened with their legs spread on the hips of the carrier. The baby is completely enveloped in a big cloth folded three or four times, which goes round the baby's body and is fastened round the front of the carrier. It always needs the help of a second person to place a baby on the carrier's back; the carrier supports the baby from behind with his or her hands and the helper folds the cloth round and supports the baby while the carrier ties it. The enveloping cloth usually comes up to the neck and the baby's head lolls com-

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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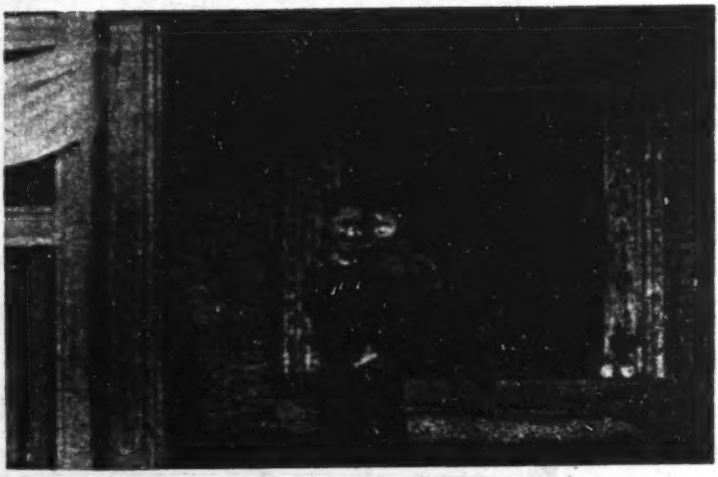

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Above : Chudo with his youngest daughter in the monastery porch.
Below : Tafoor, his wife, Chimpet, the eldest and youngest daughter.

[facing p. 296]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way [171] among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. [857] Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

854 is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him; 857 Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers 854 often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few [833] weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lepcha babies are in fact extremely quiet and I practically never heard one cry; often during the day-long ceremonies there would be five or six children under three present, and one would really not be conscious of their presence. Even when children can move about they are remarkably quiet; and the complete absence of fidgeting is one of the most noticeable characteristics of Lepcha children. 854

The mental reactions of Lepcha babies seemed to me very slow. Often a baby under a year old would catch hold of my finger; after about half a minute it would recognise that I was a stranger and start whimpering; but quite a little more time would pass before it would let go of me. Babies have far more confidence when they are tied on to the back of an elder person than when they are held on the lap or are on the ground. I frequently dressed small wounds and washed the eyes of babies fastened on a back without their showing the slightest fear or making any noise, whereas when they were held in the arms or seated in the lap they were much more nervous; indeed when parents brought up their babies for medical attention I found it was much easier to treat them if the babies were first put on their backs.

It is practically only after nightfall and on the rare occasions when its guardian has work to do inside the house that babies are laid on the ground. Unless its guardian can keep a constant eye on it babies under the age of three are all the time strapped on somebody's back, irrespective of the work the guardian may be doing; neither grown-ups nor elder children appear to be impeded by the burden of a baby. Lepcha babies spend a great deal of their time in the first three years of their life learning to abandon themselves completely passively to the movements of their active carriers. It is a common sight to see a woman pounding rice—a very violent exercise which necessitates alternately straining the body and raising the arms and then bending sharply almost double—with her baby strapped on her back and possibly sleeping; the baby's head lolls in every direction with each movement.

Youngest or only children are usually carried much longer than other babies and consequently have an even longer training in complete passivity. In a mixed gathering I always found it easy to spot youngest or only children, partly by their timidity and their fear of leaving their elders, and partly by their insistent demands for attention and the bad-tempered crying in which they indulged if this attention was not given—types of behaviour ordinary 855

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

855 Lepcha children do not manifest. The extra timidity and lack of self-reliance seems to persist amongst such children until they are themselves parents. Amongst adults I did not notice any consistent type of behaviour which would indicate an only child, but the youngest, if there were elder siblings living, seemed to carry a great deal of their attitude of reliance on their parents over to their elder siblings until relatively late in life. The Lepchas agree that a youngest child is generally the best loved and most spoilt and given the best food, but they did not consider that there was any consistent difference in character between the youngest and other children ; some might be cleverer than their elders, others duller.

854 Babies are very little talked to, and when they are it is usually in baby language. They are patted and kissed quite a lot. Kissing—the pressing of the lips on to another's cheek—is exclusively a pattern of behaviour between adults and young children. It forms no part of adult sexual behaviour. Adults who have been in the relationship of parent and child click their tongues at one another when they meet after a prolonged absence. Occasionally a woman will play with a baby's lips and tongue with her own tongue—a pastime both parties appear to enjoy ; but by far the most common stimulation of children is patting their bottoms while they are being carried on a person's back ; both men and women do this almost automatically when they are walking about or standing talking while carrying a baby ; the patting is gentle and rhythmic.

Until a child is fairly well developed its parents do not encourage it to acquire physical independence and body techniques, chiefly I think on account of the long distances people have to go to reach their fields ; a toddling and stumbling baby is far more of a handicap than a carried one. Elder siblings are more likely to encourage a baby in walking and balance, as the baby is a far greater burden and drawback to a child of six or seven than to an adult. The Lepchas consider that the backwardness of only children is due to the fact that they have no elder siblings to encourage and teach them.

While a baby is still at the breast its chief diet is pounded grain cooked in water or milk. When they have all their teeth they are given little pieces of meat, but only as titbits and not as the main part of the meal. They are given fruits as they ripen. After about [252] the age of two they are given popped corn and cooked grain to nibble while they are hungry, and from about that age they start getting a sip of *chi*.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood. 854 [157]

iv

In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not, 858

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

METHODS OF CARRYING CHILDREN

Tafoor and his youngest daughter : Jiroong behind.

Tafoor's two middle daughters.

[Facing p. 304]

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

jewels of any women in Lingthem—and also very considerable generosity. She practically supports the children of Pargeut, who is distantly related to her husband (they share a common grandmother) and acts more like their mother than their own mother does. The consequence was that she was the only person who had the confidence of Kondé.[5] When Kondé was having her very painful sores dressed Mrs. Datoop would hold and soothe her with an altogether surprising physical gentleness and tact which was unparalleled among other Lepcha women. 159x

No scandal had ever been attached to Mrs. Datoop's name but she had the reputation of being highly sexed and all her potential *oong-op* have taken full advantage of the relationship.

For four generations Mrs. Datoop's family had the peculiarity of rearing their children in cradles. She was so reared and so were all her children, but Pembu her eldest son has not used one for his own child. [184 854]

Pembu.

Pembu was born in 1908 and was weaned at the age of two. As a child he was exceptionally frightened and nervous of strangers: indeed he is to this day. As a young child he was very frequently and seriously ill. When he was older up to the age of ten he used to sulk if reprimanded or punished and threaten to kill himself by jumping into the fire or from a high place. The parents would not try to restrain him; they would say 'If such a child wants to kill himself he can.' Sometimes he would run away for the day to an 'uncle's' but he always came back of his own accord of an evening.

At the age of five[6] he was sent to Gangtok as a servant for the Maharajah; the community has to furnish perpetually two boys for this work. In Gangtok he lived with an 'aunt' Kafermu, a woman who had at that time no children. He used to come home yearly for a holiday. The first year he was there he was very miserable but the second time he returned happily enough. Mrs. Datoop said that all the time he was away or when he was ill she was always very anxious and unhappy. When Pembu was about fifteen he quarrelled with his 'uncle' who complained to the Maharajah and Pembu came home for good. Datoop and his wife were glad to have their son back but regretted the cause of his return. On his

[5] See Chapter Twelve, pp. 322–323.

[6] So he says: but as has been pointed out, Lepchas have no number sense, and I think he was probably older.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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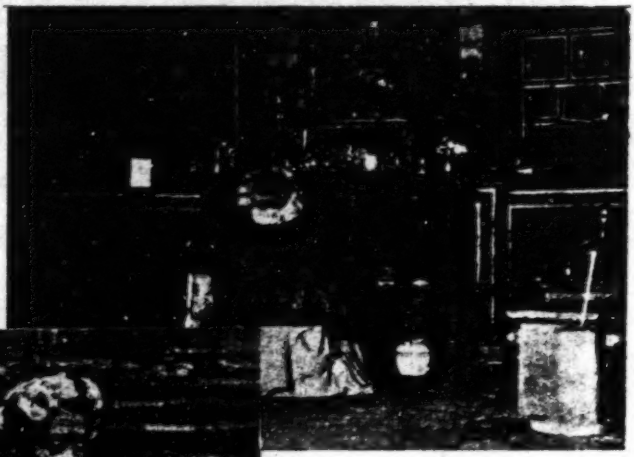

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

[778]

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[facing p. 124]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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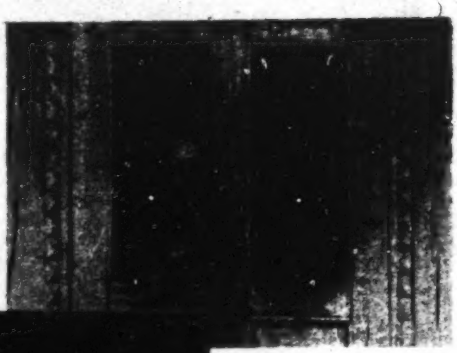
Happy family.



[205]

Lepcha girl.

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Tafoor's two daughters.

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Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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41. Lepcha mother carrying her baby

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42. The baby in the cradle

[End Plate 17]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child [855] is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

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than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

832 426 562

viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

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Lepcha babies are in fact extremely quiet and I practically never heard one cry; often during the day-long ceremonies there would be five or six children under three present, and one would really not be conscious of their presence. Even when children can move about they are remarkably quiet; and the complete absence of fidgeting is one of the most noticeable characteristics of Lepcha children. 854

The mental reactions of Lepcha babies seemed to me very slow. Often a baby under a year old would catch hold of my finger; after about half a minute it would recognise that I was a stranger and start whimpering; but quite a little more time would pass before it would let go of me. Babies have far more confidence when they are tied on to the back of an elder person than when they are held on the lap or are on the ground. I frequently dressed small wounds and washed the eyes of babies fastened on a back without their showing the slightest fear or making any noise, whereas when they were held in the arms or seated in the lap they were much more nervous; indeed when parents brought up their babies for medical attention I found it was much easier to treat them if the babies were first put on their backs.

It is practically only after nightfall and on the rare occasions when its guardian has work to do inside the house that babies are laid on the ground. Unless its guardian can keep a constant eye on it babies under the age of three are all the time strapped on somebody's back, irrespective of the work the guardian may be doing; neither grown-ups nor elder children appear to be impeded by the burden of a baby. Lepcha babies spend a great deal of their time in the first three years of their life learning to abandon themselves completely passively to the movements of their active carriers. It is a common sight to see a woman pounding rice—a very violent exercise which necessitates alternately straining the body and raising the arms and then bending sharply almost double—with her baby strapped on her back and possibly sleeping; the baby's head lolls in every direction with each movement.

Youngest or only children are usually carried much longer than other babies and consequently have an even longer training in complete passivity. In a mixed gathering I always found it easy to spot youngest or only children, partly by their timidity and their fear of leaving their elders, and partly by their insistent demands for attention and the bad-tempered crying in which they indulged if this attention was not given—types of behaviour ordinary 855

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855 Lepcha children do not manifest. The extra timidity and lack of self-reliance seems to persist amongst such children until they are themselves parents. Amongst adults I did not notice any consistent type of behaviour which would indicate an only child, but the youngest, if there were elder siblings living, seemed to carry a great deal of their attitude of reliance on their parents over to their elder siblings until relatively late in life. The Lepchas agree that a youngest child is generally the best loved and most spoilt and given the best food, but they did not consider that there was any consistent difference in character between the youngest and other children; some might be cleverer than their elders, others duller.

854 Babies are very little talked to, and when they are it is usually in baby language. They are patted and kissed quite a lot. Kissing—the pressing of the lips on to another's cheek—is exclusively a pattern of behaviour between adults and young children. It forms no part of adult sexual behaviour. Adults who have been in the relationship of parent and child click their tongues at one another when they meet after a prolonged absence. Occasionally a woman will play with a baby's lips and tongue with her own tongue—a pastime both parties appear to enjoy; but by far the most common stimulation of children is patting their bottoms while they are being carried on a person's back; both men and women do this almost automatically when they are walking about or standing talking while carrying a baby; the patting is gentle and rhythmic.

Until a child is fairly well developed its parents do not encourage it to acquire physical independence and body techniques, chiefly I think on account of the long distances people have to go to reach their fields; a toddling and stumbling baby is far more of a handicap than a carried one. Elder siblings are more likely to encourage a baby in walking and balance, as the baby is a far greater burden and drawback to a child of six or seven than to an adult. The Lepchas consider that the backwardness of only children is due to the fact that they have no elder siblings to encourage and teach them.

While a baby is still at the breast its chief diet is pounded grain cooked in water or milk. When they have all their teeth they are given little pieces of meat, but only as titbits and not as the main part of the meal. They are given fruits as they ripen. After about [252] the age of two they are given popped corn and cooked grain to nibble while they are hungry, and from about that age they start getting a sip of *chi*.

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861 draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given
867 a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a
[82] deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born
858] 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

868 At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

857 From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

855 As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children
869 —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was 858
tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son;
but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son
finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem
who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who [732]
is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha 855
the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being
treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a 858
rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *asék*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

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855 education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status
858 approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

857 Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging
[15] grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a
531] great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

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the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

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but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [793]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death cere- [765]
monies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix I, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analysis]

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796

The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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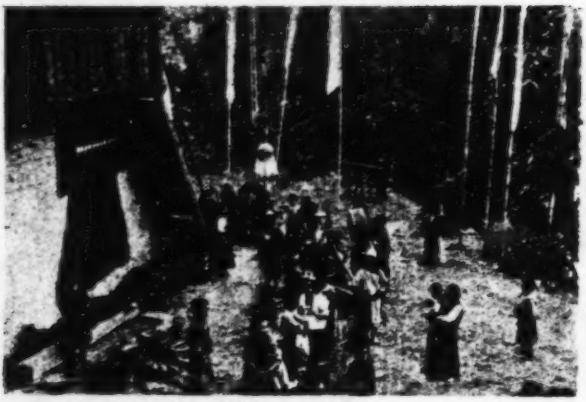
855]



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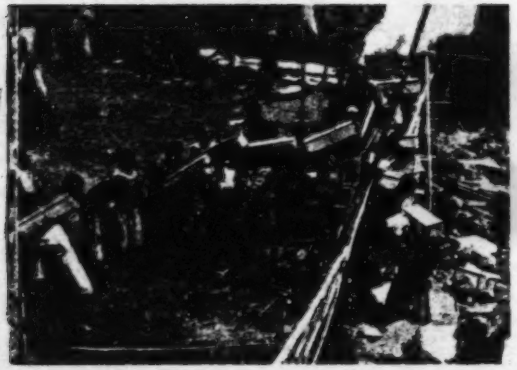
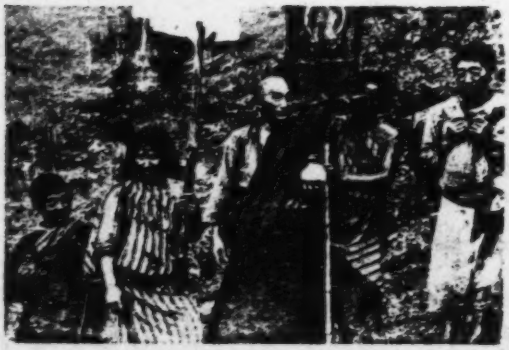


The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.



[Facing p. 290]

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its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance. 846 [827]

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on. 846 787 [822]

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old. 844 751 [856]

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a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the [826]

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856 upper. Should the contrary occur it will indicate that the child is
826 a victim of the evil supernatural Sumoo Thor. When such people grow up all their domestic animals will fail; if the child is a girl her husband will die young and she will be left an early widow; if a boy all his children will die in infancy. There is no unanimity as to whether parents would inform their children when they grow older of such evil prognosis; the general opinion is that though parents themselves would not tell the children the elder siblings are liable to know of the fact and to mention it in the course of family squabbles. Tobgé's sister is believed to have Sumoo Thor as she has pointed teeth in the front of her lower jaw. People have teased her about this but she has replied that she 'doesn't care, and anyhow her odd teeth are the result of a *tamtoom* and have nothing to do with Sumoo Thor.' There is nothing to do to avert the misfortunes from teeth arising in the wrong place; it is the destiny following a child from its previous incarnation. Similarly moles above the level of the eyes in boys and below them in girls portray the presence of Sumoo Thor; moles in the contrary positions are lucky.

A baby should not be given either bear or frog to eat or it will be late in speaking. You can tell from the way a child cries when it is six months old if it is going to be dumb or not.

854 Until children start walking they do not usually have clothes at all; in the house they are wrapped up in warm folded cloths, not so tightly as to restrict their movements, and usually lie on their back on the floor or raised bed-partition. For the first month or six weeks and occasionally longer they are carried in the arms; after that they are carried on the back of a parent or elder sibling. There are two positions in which the child is held on the back; the most usual is a semi-foetal one with the enveloping cloth catching the child under the knees which are folded up to the body so that the child only touches its carrier from the knees to the feet and with the upper part of the body. Occasionally, however, children, especially when they have passed one year, are fastened with their legs spread on the hips of the carrier. The baby is completely enveloped in a big cloth folded three or four times, which goes round the baby's body and is fastened round the front of the carrier. It always needs the help of a second person to place a baby on the carrier's back; the carrier supports the baby from behind with his or her hands and the helper folds the cloth round and supports the baby while the carrier ties it. The enveloping cloth usually comes up to the neck and the baby's head lolls com-

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

[856] By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

● [856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 171] houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* —Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will say nothing about it.

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842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [854] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he 857 [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [634] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 -- Analyst]

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224 hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from their trap unharmed. Bear skins and also their gall bladders which are much sought after by the Chinese as aphrodisiacs (they fetch Rs. 5 apiece in Kalimpong) were an inducement to catch these animals when money was not plentiful or non-existent; nowadays with money from cardamum there is less economic justification for taking the risks involved. Catching small birds in snares does not count as hunting; it is one of the commonest pursuits of boys after the age of about eight, who take their catches home as presents for their mother.

ii

241 The agricultural land in Zongu can be divided into two cate-
311 gories: the land under permanent cultivation, and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivation is of three types; there is the *sing* or field-garden against the house, cardamum fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern: cardamum was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago. Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamum fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire, as it were, a capital value; this is less true of cardamum, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces; to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour.

461 Until the beginning of this century the wealth of a Lepcha
556 household depended on the energy of its members and on the proportion of able-bodied adults to dependants—children and the old and invalid—; if there was more than one dependent to one able-bodied adult life was liable to be rather hard. Nowadays it is theoretically possible that a lazy heir of industrious ancestors might be in a better position in the community than his own industry warranted. Formerly the inevitable rule of Lepcha economy was 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his work', tempered by the co-operation and willing help which was and is freely given to those afflicted by temporary or permanent

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231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.[8] In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even unknowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that case the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

262 673

[757] [8] There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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854 pletely freely; sometimes, however, if it is sunny and the baby is sleeping the cloth will be pulled out over the baby's head so as to support the head more firmly against the body of the carrier.

For the first eighteen months or two years at the smallest reckoning the baby is continually carried when out of doors and is only put on the floor inside its own house. Unless the baby is a first or only child it should be able to walk slightly by about two years and should not need carrying after thirty months, if it is in good health. Of course if the children are ill they will be carried much later; and the youngest child, or an only child, is liable to be carried very much longer. When babies start to crawl they are usually laid somewhere near the mother while she is working, or near somebody else who can keep an eye on them. It occasionally happens that babies will crawl to the fire and burn or scald themselves; Aga's son was scalded and Chelim has a permanent scar from burning. It is, however, very seldom that crawlers get wounded in this way [171] among the Lepchas; among the Nepali Major Morris says that there is scarcely a grown-up who does not carry scars from childhood burns.

It is considered that the use of a cradle would be fatal to Lepcha children, and they are normally never used. There is, however, one exception to this rule; the family line of Mrs. Datoop have the custom of employing Nepali cradles (these are small cradles on rockers which can be carried); she herself was reared in one and reared all her children in them. She is the most independent, self-willed, and competent woman in Lingthem; of her three sons the eldest, Pembu, is exceptionally nervous, and the other two notably independent. The daughters, who have married back into their mother's community, I saw too little of to judge. Since there is only this one family, and since Mrs. Datoop is herself such a strong personality, it is quite impossible to decide whether the use of the cradle, with its somewhat greater freedom of movement and its slight restriction of contact with other bodies, had any influence on the formation of the characters of these rather exceptional people.

Except in the first few weeks of its life a child who is not an eldest or only child does not receive exclusive attention from its mother; the mother is the only woman who feeds it, but a great part of its time is usually spent in the company of elder siblings. [857] Children are more often carried by women than men; in a mixed family the elder daughters spend much more time looking after their younger siblings than their brothers do. If, however, the first child

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854 is a boy a great deal of the care of the next child will fall on him; 857 Chimpet's parents accounted for his rather small stature by the fact that he had to carry his sister, two years younger than himself. This sister in her turn shared with her mother the care of the two baby girls; only when one was ill with chicken-pox, or when her mother wanted her help, did Chimpet have to act as nurse. Fathers 854 often carry their children on their backs, especially if they are going a long journey; men nurse children, holding them in their arms or on their laps; but I never saw a baby tied on to the back of any man except their father, grandfather, or elder brother. Women on the other hand always appear willing to carry any baby, even if they are completely unrelated.

During the first few weeks the baby sleeps in its mother's arms; afterwards it is given its own mattress beside its mother, with the mother's breast always within reach. There has apparently never been a case of a mother overlaying her baby. During the first few [833] weeks of a baby's life the parents copulate on the side and *a retro* but return fairly soon to the preferred prone position. It sometimes happens that when the baby becomes capable of movement it feels its parents' bodies and pats them while they are copulating. I have no leads as to what psychological effect, if any, this has on the children; even those older children and adults who remember lactating do not appear to remember feeling their parents copulating; I only heard about such behaviour from the parents of young children.

Children should not cry. If a child starts whimpering some attempt is usually made to find out why; if it is hungry or sleepy or uncomfortable an effort is made to gratify the desire it expresses. Should this be impossible somebody tries to distract the child's attention by waving something bright—a flower or a piece of paper—in front of it, and then giving it to the child to hold. Should this fail the baby is usually walked up and down, while the carrier gently taps its bottom; this treatment appears to be very soothing to Lepcha babies. If bigger babies cry they may be threatened that 'a Tibetan will come with his big bag to take you away, or with his dagger to kill you', and even if they do not understand the words, the tone of voice will frighten and hush it. Grown-ups and older children are quite unscrupulous in using bogies, in which they themselves do not believe, to quiet younger children. Only babies believe in the kidnapping or murdering foreigner, in the big bear round the corner, in the tiny Sang-rong *moong*.

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861 draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given
867 a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a
[827 deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born
858] 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

868 At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

857 From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

855 As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children
869 —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

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or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils !, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

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192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon
195 this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of
864 marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are
[839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the
[522] truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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come back from another direction, often beating a home-made drum or singing some Lepcha equivalent to 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?' It may be remarked that a show of violence or a threatening gesture is always greeted with laughter by Lepcha children, whether made by an adult or another child; a cross voice on the other hand will quieten them at once and make them stop whatever they are engaged in.

There were some rather curious sidelights on these chasing situations. Chudo's four-year-old son was sadly torn between expectant pleasure and fear; he could see that his elders enjoyed being chased and rather felt he would like to be himself; he used to peep round obstacles at me and would invent errands for himself which would make him run quickly round me in a semicircle; but if I took any notice of his overtures and made a menacing gesture he would start to cry. Although he never got quite courageous enough to let himself be chased by me, he ended by having considerable confidence in me; and one day when he fell down and grazed himself he stopped crying as soon as I picked him up.

At the other end of the childhood range boys of fifteen and sixteen looked as though they would like to join in the game, but felt that their dignity should prevent them doing so. Patek, Ribu's elder brother, was particularly torn; he was seventeen, married, and, owing to the recent death of his father, the head of the household of six people, including two grandmothers; at the same time the desire to play was very evident and once or twice when there were no witnesses he joined in. Datoop's youngest son, aged sixteen and engaged, was in a similar state, but he yielded more often. On the whole the girls did not play much; the greater number of them were usually looking after a younger sibling and the girls tagged along with their mothers much more than the boys did. One girl, however, very much wanted to play. This was Prumtu, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Dunbi, and Tafoor's stepsister, who was afflicted with a very bad squint. This girl was the one really unhappy child in the village. Nobody liked her and she did not live at home but with her stepbrother, Tafoor, where she was a very unimportant portion of the large household. She had not yet been *aséк*, partly because of her deformity and partly because she had the reputation of being lazy—*bla-bla-bla* as Chimpet said of her—and disobedient. She was a girl of singularly ungraceful and violent movement and was very rough; in play she would pinch people really hard and did not seem to distinguish between mock violence and real violence.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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MIKMAR AND CHIMPET PLAYING

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MIKMAR GOES OFF WITH THE *ASÉK* GIFTS TO SEE HIS NEWLY AFFIANCED BRIDE, WHOM HE DOESN'T KNOW

He is wearing his best clothes. With him are on the left Gongyop's son, with the pig on his back, and Kurma's nephew Takshyom holding a lantern, and with the copper bowl on his back; on the right Chinya, Mikmar's "paternal uncle" (really his second cousin once removed) and Chala Mandal, who is *bek-bu*. The wife lives two days' journey away. On the fence are reeds which have been bent when green drying for thatch.

F. 320

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

His sister was born when he was three. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth. He was very frightened at the birth, which he witnessed. He was told the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*, a devil the size of a small child who is especially used as a bogey to frighten children. He was weaned in two ways; first of all his mother's breasts were smeared with the new baby's excrement and secondly an aunt took him home, telling him that he must not cry because Sang-rong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him. For a week—he remembers clearly—he cried every night for his mother's breast and then resigned himself to do without. The aunt looked after him, sometimes taking him to her house, sometimes going to his and sleeping with him. She was his father's sister. 159x

As a child he was, he considers, exceptionally timid. Most of his memories are to do with being bullied by older children; a cousin of his beating him for being disobedient when he was six or seven; two older boys ducking him and other small children in the stream, whereat they cried and the parents of the small boys came and beat the bullies. He also remembers sitting beside another small child and they threw mud and cinders at one another. He was carried by his mother or grandmother till he was five years old and remembers that vividly. He also remembers playing with other children at building bridges and making a house out of twigs and of once playing tug-of-war. His father gave him a little knife when he was quite young, he thinks before he was weaned. At the same time his mother gave him a haversack. Before he got the little knife he used to try to use grown-ups' knives. When his father gave him the knife he told him to be very careful—not to cut his friends or to use the knife on stones and so on. [857]

He apparently cried easily and ran to his mother; he remembers crying and sucking at the same time whereat bystanders slapped him. Although he connects the birth of the younger sister with weaning he has always been very fond of her. His mother died when he was fifteen.

He knew about sexual intercourse when he was nine or ten but he was too timid to do anything when he played with girls and other boys. His first sexual experience was when he was fifteen with his elder brother's wife. His elder brother was away for the night and the wife called Jiroong to come and sleep with her. He took the invitation literally and went to sleep; but she forcibly seduced him. In this way she educated him and after that

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
[857] and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. - Analyst]

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in [868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. [515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she [857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old [888] and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, [857] without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong 533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attentio
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it ma
sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is
phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughl
translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; bu
apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wron
to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months ol
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or fou
months after which it commences to walk. Inside the hou
the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free wil
otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its le
straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-ha
years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When th
mother is working in the fields the baby remains in positio
on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully whi
being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwi
the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradl
are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby dow
it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; b
it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcl
child is much more carefully looked after than the corr
sponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkl
without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fi
as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst th
Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcl
[354 171] houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level
the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small childre
whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level
the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to tal
and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or fi
months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to spe
at the normal time. The speech of an average child, ho
ever, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to th
[98] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of whi

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its ●857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix I, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 — Analysis]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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857

25. Lepcha children starting for field work

142
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462

26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

858

858 STATUS OF CHILDREN--cultural definition of status periods and progression of statuses during infancy and childhood; rights, privileges, and powers of children (e.g., special exemptions); restrictions and disabilities of infants and children (e.g., special taboos); conception of legal minority; extent to which children are treated as inherently inferior or merely as inexperienced adults; stereotyped ideas about children (e.g., concepts of the good and the naughty child); differential expectations and treatment of children (e.g., according to age, sex), etc; See also:

Kin relationships 60
Guardianship 429
Age stratification 561
Marriageability of children 582
Family relationships 593
Legal liability 672
Juvenile courts 696
Special mortuary rites 766
Concept of legal majority 884

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen*-ing, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[771] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child [855] is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. [766] Children until they achieve complete physical independence are barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones
775 turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

755 In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is
751 employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an
[582] hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

787 Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

By the time a Lepcha baby is three it is already a recognisable member of its society, and the vast majority have the warm, sensuous, and fundamentally optimistic character which is typical of the Lepchas in later life. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of its group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as quickly as possible all its expressed wishes. It has come to expect from the rest of the society a rather negligent and impersonal but consistent kindness; unpleasant sensations, and especially hunger, have been reduced to a minimum. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone nor is it allowed to cry without receiving attention. The training in cleanliness is not given any strong emotional importance, nor are any bodily functions in any way a subject for embarrassment or shocked shame; the impetus to restraint is chiefly social approval. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voices and expressions of those around him; these fears are soon centred round certain words—devils, bears, tigers, snakes, Tibetans, strangers. But except for the accident of death, an unweaned child is unlikely to have undergone any obviously traumatic experience; the usually delayed weaning and birth of a younger sibling is likely to be the first really frightening experience. To my mind the chief formative influences in the earliest years of the life of a Lepcha child are firstly continuous physical satisfaction, secondly the learning of passivity, thirdly the impersonal attitude of the majority of parents, and finally the looking to elder siblings as much as, and even more than, to the parents for attention and help. The relying on elder siblings as though they were parents is certainly a major force in adult life. It is, I think, the habits and memories of this prolonged and satisfactory infancy which support the children through the less pleasant educative years of later childhood. 854 [157]

iv

In Lepcha an infant in arms is called *ing-ha*, a child that can walk *a-kup*. The word *ing-ha* is only used in this connection, but the word *a-kup* can be used as a suffix to any noun to indicate that the thing referred to is smaller than usual; a *ban kup* is a little knife, a *li kup* a little house. I think this linguistic point is of importance, as an indication of the attitude held by Lepchas towards children: they are *little adults*, and as such bound by adult rules; they are not, 858

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

858 as with us, almost a different species with their special 'childish' rules of conduct and ways of thought. It follows that—save perhaps individually in the immediate post-infancy period—childishness is not considered an excuse either for anti-social behaviour or for stupidity; a child is capable of committing crimes as much as an adult is, and may be punished as severely, though in different ways; and, judged by adult standards, their conversation is stupid and largely meaningless.

But although in one way adults regard children as potentially small adults, they have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them. Children are not quite human. If they survive they will turn into proper members of society; but if they die they will turn into particularly malevolent devils—num-een *moong*. There is no assurance of survival, either realistically or supernaturally; the horoscopes always hedge on this point: 'Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year . . . he will [766] live to be seventy-one.' A child who dies before about his tenth year is treated very differently to an adult; no funeral ceremonies are held for it and the body is thrown unceremoniously into the river; but elaborate apotropaic ceremonies are performed[5] to ward away its ghost-devil; and even should a child die at a distance these apotropaic ceremonies are performed, whereas for dead adults who die abroad no sort of funeral service is performed. The more attached a child was to his home and family, the more vigorously will his num-een *moong* attempt to reduce the other members to the same state as itself. Consequently a child represents potential supernatural danger. A dead infant turns into ing-bong *moong*, which is far less dangerous and much easier to get rid of.

The attitude of parents towards a child between the ages of about four and ten are therefore twofold: the child is a potential adult, but one in need of training and education to make him a socially valuable adult; at the same time the child is a potential source of supernatural danger, and as such it would be uneconomical to lavish too much affection on it. Should the child live it will be a great source of comfort and help; should it die it would be a source of great danger; the two contingencies must be taken into account. Finally, in the present a young child is often a nuisance and always an expense.

Some time between the child's third and fifth year—usually about the age of four—a child's achievement of physical indepen-

[5] See Chapter Thirteen, p. 352–353, also Chapter Eight, p. 233.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

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867 a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a
[82] deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born
858] 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

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869 —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

869 copy their elders in prostrating themselves in front of the images of the lamaist gods, whether these gods are in the monastery or private houses.

858 The Lepchas are very explicit about their aims in the education of their children. Children fall into two categories—*ko-chet*, or good, and *ta-né*, or naughty. These terms are only applied to children and are clearly defined. 'A good child (*ko-chet*) will help its parents in the fields and in the house; will tell the truth and own up if it is charged with wrong-doing; will listen carefully to its elders and learn what they teach him; will help old people and will be peaceable. A bad child (*tané*) will tell lies and quarrel and insult people; if it is reproved it will draw its knife in anger and won't own up; it will take other people's property, and not do its proper share of the work.'

A child is not placed into one of these two categories early, for they are final and not temporary qualifications. The character of a young child is considered malleable, and the early years are used to evoke the *ko-chet* qualities and destroy the *tané* ones; a child is only called *tané* when it appears that education has failed. There is considerable variation of opinion as to when judgement can be finally made; some consider that a child's character is fixed at the age of eight, others that it will not completely manifest itself till the child is married; the general consensus of opinion is, however, that a child will fall into one of the two categories by the age of ten. Whatever age is chosen, it is believed that at that time, the child's character, previously vague and undetermined, is finally fixed and will not later be modified.

A child which may, if great care is not taken, later become *tané* is indicated in its earlier childhood by several characteristic traits; if it hacks at the house and door when it is given its knife, if it cries because it is scolded or because something is taken away from it which might be harmful or which does not belong to it, if it uses abusive language, these are all signs that the parents must be especially watchful. It is the parents' duty to eradicate such inborn naughtiness. A child's companions are also considered to be of great importance: 'Good companions will make a good child, bad companions a naughty one.' It is believed that excessive spoiling and indulgence by both parents may warp a child's character, but not irremediably.

If a child is not good by about the age of ten there is very little hope for it. The experiment may be tried of sending it away to be

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

reared by strangers, but this is seldom successful. This course was 858
tried with a boy from Lungdeum and also with Katel's eldest son; but both boys ran away and wandered all over the place, Katel's son finally dying young in foreign parts. The only person in Lingthem who was really *tané*—a quarreller and a thief—was Sangkyar, who [732] is a cretinous defective.

V

When a child stops being a baby and becomes a young Lepcha 855
the world becomes a more difficult place for him. Instead of being 858
treated with a rather impersonal kindness, he is now treated with a rather impersonal neglect. He has the compensation of adult equipment—the knife and haversack which are the outward sign of physical independence—but he is also judged by adult standards; he is capable of committing adult crimes, and has to show that he possesses the adult virtues. By negative standards the children form a group; the younger ones leave the baby group to become trained to be adults; the elder ones are by their increased knowledge and initiative more and more accepted into the group of full-grown adults, as they become more self-supporting—it is considered that at the age of twelve boys and girls should be capable of doing the full work of a man or woman—and marriage arrangements are made for them. The children are not in opposition to the adults; they are not as a group ill-treated, though possibly individuals may be, except for the occasional blows they may get if they are a nuisance; they are provided with plenty of food as before; and, except for only children, or children of the very poorest parents, they have an animal or so and a little piece of ground as their private property.[8] Full adult status is a goal they have to work towards; they see this goal and the greater number of children are very anxious to grow up. This is particularly true of the boys, who have to wait longer before they can be considered fully adult; the girls attain psychological maturity much earlier, for by the age of twelve they are considered to be at their most beautiful and are usually *asék*'d; and even earlier they may become sexually conscious and realise that because of their sex they have a quality which makes them important and desirable to adults. It is only temperamentally or socially maladjusted children who appear to be oppressed by the neglect and occasional harsh treatment which is part of their

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 108.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in the same house, and maternal relations generally live far away. If, however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal grandfather or married aunt children can always go and pay them short visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and who was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger children, used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, the Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he would go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his family, and at other times he would run away there of his own accord for a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, however, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except for these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhappy at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child in Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discussed earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distantly related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chano's second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasionally threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhappy but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turning into a bad boy, a *tané*.

● 858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhappy time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children are not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. But most of the children realise, though perhaps they would not enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity and occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary preliminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adult status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade ca[illegible] seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustra[illegible] this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described. 537

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide. 626 157 152 [762]

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community. 861 155

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow 626 154

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

867 young people copy their elders in showing reverence where reverence is considered to be due.

861 The child's moral education or moulding is performed in two ways—by precept and by punishment. Moral axioms stressing the 867 desirability of social approval are frequently repeated to children: 'As long as you help others, others will help you'; 'Nobody will help a thief', and so on.

If a child is naughty or tiresome—if it gets in the way, or makes a nuisance of itself, or if it excretes inside the house when it can walk out by itself—the annoyed adult will probably hit it in some way; it may be rapped over the head with the knuckles or have its ear tweaked, flicked with the fingers or cut with a switch; a man may catch it on the calves with the thin strap of his knife scabbard, a woman hit it with a stick such as is used for stirring food. These punishments for being a nuisance are given in a very impersonal way, almost as an automatic reaction to a disagreeable stimulus; a single movement is made, usually without the adult interrupting more than temporarily the work he or she is engaged on and without any verbal remonstrances or scoldings beyond that which may accompany the blow. The emphasis is on the annoyance or work caused to the adult, not on the naughtiness of the child. The punishments are always given immediately after the offence and in anger; they are given capriciously without any emphasis that they are for the child's good; children mustn't be a nuisance and mustn't cause unnecessary work. Occasionally when they are really cross people will hit a child harder than is necessary; Chimpet still carries the scar on his forehead from a blow he received from his mother when he was three or four years old; he kept on getting in her way while she was busy cooking, until she picked up a piece of firewood and hit him with it, unfortunately catching his forehead with a pointed edge. It is considered that usually one parent will punish a child more than the other, and it is generally the mother who does the most punishment. Often if one parent is cross with a child, the other will defend it: 'If both parents are angry together with a child at the same time they might kill it; if both spoil it the child will grow up naughty.'

But besides being an occasional nuisance, a child is also capable of committing crimes, and in such cases the punishment is severe and even drastic.[6] If a child steals (even fruit from the garden of a neighbour) or spoils anybody's property, or insults people or

[6] Many examples of these punishments are given in Chapter Fifteen.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 376 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head. [582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction. [595] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in [587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill. [861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [297]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585
588

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
● 861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

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the ground shredding a bamboo. He playfully kicked the 159
ball of twine which his father had just been making. This 861
made him very angry and he threw his knife at him; the scar of this he has to this day. He never loved his adopting parents. They used to beat him a lot on the back, and this always made him belch. Whenever he stole they tied his hands together with brushwood and held them over the fire. Although this never injured them it frightened him very much, and he decided to give up stealing.

Karma was now very unhappy. Although his adopting 159
parents were rich they gave him only a second-hand knife and some old and worn-out clothes. His mother, who was still very poor, had married again, and from time to time he used to go and see her. Whenever he did this he used always to take a little food, which he had saved out of the little that was given him. When he was about sixteen he decided to return to his own home. His mother asked him why he had come and told him to go back; but his stepfather remained silent. At that time Karma's two brothers and his eldest sister, who was already married, were living at home with their mother. While he was still feeling rather unsettled his elder brother said to him: "Why not stay at home and let us work the fields together; after all are we not real brothers?" Karma was fond of his elder brother, but did not care very much for his mother; but he decided to stay and help them work in the fields. After he had been at home about a month two men came from his adopting father's village. He was husking rice at the time. The two men came straight up to him and told him he must return with them; but this he refused to do. They then told him that his adopting father had bought a grindstone in a nearby village and that he wanted him to carry it home. A few days later he and his brother did take the grindstone over; but in order not to be seen they left it in an out-house and stole quietly away. Some weeks after this Karma's adopting father, whose name was Pashu, himself arrived. He had come over to attend a ceremony which the second Dorje-Lopön was performing

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 171] houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

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again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 584
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

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527 its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal [273] cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and 862 hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

527 From about midday food is being served almost continuously; 262 there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

527 All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these [302] intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though [273] usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

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553 Some time during the ceremony the child is given its first name. This may be given by the officiating Mun, or suggested by anyone 846 else present. Usually the father invites suggestions. Unless the child has some physical peculiarity or some peculiar circumstance connected with its birth the first (temporary) name is usually the day of the week on which it was born, in Tibetan.

833 Either three, seven, or twenty-one days after delivery the husband copulates with his wife ritually, on the side and *a retro*, 846 moving very slowly and gently, so that the semen may take away the pains of child-birth. If this is done after three days, it is called *sak-non mon-lok*, if after seven *tang-bong ʒaam*. It is only put off after seven days at the request of the wife, and there is no name for a later performance. Copulation *a retro* is fairly usual, though some people dislike it; it is considered more discreet than the normal position and is used when quietness is desired, and to avoid being noticed.

iii

853 For the first two days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the third day, at its birth feast, it is given a tiny pellet of pounded rice mixed with butter; and thereafter it is given a small bit of this mixture three times a day. At about the age of eight months it is given a little cooked and pounded rice, and after that the solid part of its diet is gradually increased. Babies are not 862 usually weaned until the birth of the next sibling, and there is usually an interval of three to four years between births; consequently the greater number of children are on a completely solid diet before they are weaned. It sometimes happens that the mother becomes pregnant again fairly quickly; in such cases the babies are fed on cows' milk and rice, a diet which produces pot-belly. This is exceptional, and only a couple of babies are thus malformed.

In the greater number of cases children are old enough to understand talk before they are weaned, and they are told that they cannot suckle any more because the new baby wants the milk; if the child will not accept this the mother smears her breasts with the new baby's excreta to disgust the older child. Children are always told that the new-born baby is Sang-rong *moong*, who is a bogey the size of a small child specially invented to frighten children; this is done to prevent young children handling the new-born infant, and also to scare them into renouncing the rivalry for the mother's breast.

On occasion weaning is accompanied by physical separation.

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Jiroong, who has extraordinarily precise memories of his infancy said that 'he was three when his sister was born. He was taking his mother's breast till the birth, which he witnessed and which frightened him very much. He was told that the new baby was Sang-rong *moong*. He was weaned in two ways; his mother's breasts were smeared with excrement, and a sister of his father took him away to her home and told him he must not cry because "Sang-rong *moong* was with his mother and would eat him". He remembers vividly that for a week he cried every night for his mother's breast, and then resigned himself to doing without. For some time his aunt looked after him, sometimes keeping him with her at her house, and sometimes going to his home and sleeping with him.' In the same way Tobgé's wife had sent her son, aged a little over two, to live with her parents in their village a day's journey away. Since she was not pregnant again this conduct was disapproved of; it was considered to be a further illustration of Tobgé's irresponsibility and her immorality.

Normally a child is only suckled by its mother, but if the mother dies, or for any other reason becomes incapable of suckling the child, it may be suckled by another woman whom the child will call 'mother', or occasionally by the grandmother. A child does not have more than one nurse at a time, and would not be given a feed by a lactating woman during the mother's temporary absence. The reason given for this is that in taking another woman's milk the child would contract a debt which it would never be able to repay; and this debt would be a burden to it after its own death.

It is a general Lepcha belief that any woman who has once borne a child can produce milk spontaneously when a baby sucks; and this seems to be borne out by the fact that on occasion if the mother dies the grandmother will suckle the grandchild. I myself saw Kurma's mother-in-law suckling her granddaughter, though it was over twenty years since she herself had borne her last child. Some women too can produce milk without having borne a child; at first this milk is indigestible for the infant, but it is subsequently perfectly all right. If the mother dies the husband's breasts will very often swell; but they only produce a sort of lymph and not proper milk. As far as my observations and inquiries go it seems clear that Lepcha women lactate with far more facility than European women.

A youngest child will continue sucking until the mother's milk dries up, or until the child 'becomes ashamed'; this may continue

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [291]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585
588

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868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

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a day until they can walk and look after themselves. Except at these washings the baby's body is not cleaned. Children do not usually have any fitted clothes until they can walk, but are instead wrapped in loose cloths. 854

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of three months when the children are taken out on to the balcony at regular intervals; they should learn to cry when they want to be taken out and by the time they can crawl should be able to crawl there by themselves. This is, however, an ideal rather than a real statement; sphincter control and bodily cleanliness are not regarded as of emotional importance, and some quite big children refuse to accept the discipline and excrete inside the house, especially if the house has bamboo flooring. Children aged three or over who cannot or will not learn sphincter control are considered to show a bad prognosis; when they grow up they 'will show forth a bad heart (disposition)'. If big children are dirty they may be given a smack or other slight punishment; but as often as not no notice will be taken and the dirt just cleared away by some older person. Only if the child spoils or dirties somebody else's property will he be severely punished. When a child can move about by itself it is taught to go outside to relieve itself; it is always accompanied by an older person till it is quite big to keep away the scavenging dogs and pigs. It is cleaned, and taught to clean itself with sticks and leaves. 863

Lepchas say that children should start noticing things at two months, start crawling at six months, stand when they are a year old, and walk three months later. This time-table seems to me to be in point of fact over-quick and none of the children under eighteen months that I saw could walk. The child is helped to stand and walk a little by its elder siblings. If a baby learns to walk early it is a sign that the next child is coming soon. Children are not expected to talk until they are two years old, and certainly not before they can walk; but they understand certain baby sounds, such as *ka-ka*—don't—*aah-dji*—take care—and *bam-bam*—keep quiet—in their second year. 856

The baby's first tooth should appear at the age of eight months and it should have all its milk teeth within the year unless by any misfortune a pregnant woman has looked at the baby, in which case the baby will not teeth until the woman is delivered and her child also teeths. It is most important that with a boy the teeth should come through the lower jaw first and with a girl through the [826]

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

856 By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

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837 as several Lepchas said when the point was raised 'Who can force a grown woman against her will?' More distantly related women, such as 'aunts', may put up a certain amount of semi-playful resistance, but no rancour is felt if it is overborne.

It is considered to be an act of excessively bad taste to copulate with a heritable wife in her husband's presence, or in such situations that there is a possibility of his witnessing it. These legalised adulteries usually take place during the husband's temporary absence, or else outside the house, in the forests or fields or field-houses; these outdoor encounters are usually very brief, and have a slightly romantic flavour. Copulation inside the house has the advantage of giving longer time, but it also exposes the couple to questionable remarks and a good deal of teasing.

836 One of the results of this situation is that almost all boys and young men get their first real sexual experience and training from 864 an older married woman. Elder brothers usually explicitly instruct their younger brothers in their rights. In Lepcha theory a woman should never make direct sexual advances—the common Lepcha words for sexual activity are, like the English ones, transitive and one-directioned—but in point of fact I found that in nearly every case men had had their first real sexual experience with the wife of an 'elder brother' or 'uncle' at the woman's direct invitation and solicitation. This is considered altogether desirable; although sexual activity is thought to be as natural and as necessary as eating, it is necessary that boys should be taught to do it properly. Thus Chudo said one day 'If I caught Chimpet (the son of his elder brother Tafoor) sleeping with my wife I shouldn't be cross at all; on the contrary I should be very pleased, for she would be teaching him how to do it properly and I would know that he was in the hands of a good teacher! On the other hand, if I caught a married man, who had a right to sleep with my wife, doing so I should reproach them for their lack of shame in doing in my presence what might better be done in my absence; if I was really angry I should tell other people about it, so that everybody might know how shameless the man had been.'

614 I have already suggested that the *ptso* was possibly earlier a geographical unit; if this were the case, it seems to me possible 835 that these permissive regulations were evolved to meet the special circumstances. For, with the *ptso* as the geographical unit, the young men would have had no possible sexual partners except through adultery or incest; and, as numerous examples show, such

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Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before burning or burial.

Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with any emotion or curiosity.[2]

ii

For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed. It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child. During those three days the mother must on no account touch the ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors, and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness of birth.

[2] See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

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192 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon
195 this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of
864 marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are
[839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the
[522] truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

Kurma spies on the birth of Apot.

X159 'When I was about six or seven I spied on a neighbour giving birth to a baby. I did this by standing under the house floor which was made of crossed bamboo; I did it by myself out of curiosity because I wanted to know what an adult woman's vulva looked like, and to see how babies were born. The woman was hanging on to a rope from the ceiling and an older woman squatted behind her and held her breasts; the woman's belt was loosened and from below I had a very good view of her vulva. The woman was groaning and at each groan the vulva rounded and the head of the child could be seen; between groans the vulva was oblong. Finally after a discharge of yellow fluid the baby was born suddenly; and then the after-birth.' (*I put some questions to Kurma about this event; he said he recollected no feelings of disgust or fear; on the contrary, the spectacle was probably exciting. He excuses his conduct by saying he was too young to know shame.*)

Early sexual experience.

X159 'When I was eight or nine I used to ask the little girls of the
● 864 neighbourhood to let me see and touch their vulvas; to which they would consent and then lie down. Nobody told me about sex; I knew naturally as everybody does; it is like eating. At the same time I only knew how to do it properly when at the age of ten I saw my elder brother, aged fifteen, lift a girl's legs in the forest.
[833] My first sexual experience was when I was twelve, with a girl of the same age. We were both employed watching animals. I had seen older people and they had urged me to try the girl; she agreed but after one attempt would have no more to do with me. Pulling back the prepuce hurt.'

Practical joke played on Kurma.

X159 'When I was about ten I was sent to live in a field hut to scare
522 away monkeys and other animals from the ripening grain; with me was a young married man, a relation of Passo's. We had grain and pumpkins to eat. The young man played the following trick on me; he told me to get a big leaf from the forest, which I did; then the young man shat on it and told me to fold it up carefully and carry it right away down to the river; I must not put it near a house or in a field. I did as I was told. This happened for

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and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

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Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [857
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fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

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[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. – Analyst]

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finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying 516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

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I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem, so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting, however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalimpong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and becoming the usual thing among the younger generation: and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such "uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me, it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation, and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders, who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder* brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is not considered to be actually incestuous.

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864 In the same way that a boy usually has his first sexual
833 experience with a woman years older than himself, so is a girl
842 generally first seduced by some older man. A number of women told us that they started their sexual life at the age of ten; and in every case they had their first experience with a grown man. The people do not see anything offensive in this; and we were unable to convince them that the custom is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the very high rate of sterility among the Jongu women. Nothing short of a complete examination by a gynæcologist would definitely establish this point; but it is significant that the several sterile women with whom we were on sufficiently intimate terms to discuss the subject all owned to having been initiated into sex at a very early age, and by men years older than themselves.

833 Except when a young boy is seduced by some elder relation a woman never makes the suggestion to copulate, although she may hint indirectly that she is not unwilling to submit. When a youth is interested in any particular girl he will generally have his first encounter with her out in the forest, or in some other secluded spot; but once relations between the two have been established it is usual for him to visit her at home. He will, if necessary, travel several miles in the dead of night for this purpose. The girl will previously explain the topography of the house to her lover and describe to him the exact place where she sleeps, so that when the time comes he may enter the house silently and make straight for her bed. He will usually creep in on all fours, stepping over the other sleeping people carefully, so as not to wake them. Should he be discovered he will at once run out of the house, and will not return that night; but if the pair are not disturbed it will generally be about two in the morning before the boy takes his departure. He will generally not leave his own home until everyone is asleep, so that he can depart unnoticed. Should the parents of the girl get to know what is happening they will not usually be angry or display any other emotion. Tafoor said that he would not mind in the least if he

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor 776
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and 152
will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

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796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was [865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 778 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form of *Tay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented [776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

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865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention. [861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old, 854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of [857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha [354 171] houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this [198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

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return by themselves to their owners' houses, where they are given a feed of salt and powdered grain. Tethered animals are also fed with gathered leaves. Each animal has its name, which it knows; unless they wander into enclosed fields they are never beaten nor spoken to roughly. As you walk about Lingthem you come upon untended cattle in every direction; and one of the strangest sights is to watch the animals returning home of an evening. A herd of cattle, perhaps a score or more, will arrive in the centre of a group of houses, and will then each turn away to their own homes; as soon as they have settled under their houses they are given their evening feed. Stranger still is the fact that during the cold months—roughly from February to April—all the cattle, except the milch-cows, are sent in an untended group into the forest up the hill behind the village. When people want their cattle back they go up the hill to the place where they are liable to congregate, or, as the Lepchas put it 'where the cattle live in the forest', usually under some noticeably big tree. Within twenty-four hours cattle which have been completely untended for four months can be collected and brought back. While the cattle are in the forest a State tax of two annas a head a month is charged.

The taming of animals so completely is a remarkable feat in itself, and is also a good symbol of the Lepchas' chief attitudes; I think it has also an important bearing on their psychological development. In neighbouring tribes herding cattle is one of the major occupations of growing boys; in this way they achieve a certain self-reliance and learn to exercise their judgement. This discipline is almost completely absent for Lepcha boys; only when predatory animals are known or suspected to be in the neighbourhood are they set to watch animals. All through his childhood and adolescence the Lepcha boy is under the supervision of, and usually in company with his elders; and I feel sure that the lack of self-reliance, the inability to stand alone, which is one of the most obvious characteristics of the young Lepcha man, is enhanced by the lack of any work specially given over to children.

The size of the herds varies very considerably. The average is about six or seven head; a few households have considerably more and some people have only one or two, or even none at all.

Goats are raised exclusively for food and sacrifice and are never milked; they are not highly esteemed and people usually only

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and groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes and stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be shot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking through the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses; people would return again and again with their friends with demands to look through these wonderful appliances. 123

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers to amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers in an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking at them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at them and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made them grow' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow', or else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say 'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them; but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four 867 123 431

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867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come 123 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured 431 seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them [576] a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very 512 small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with 264 perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

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867 young people copy their elders in showing reverence where reverence is considered to be due.

861 The child's moral education or moulding is performed in two ways—by precept and by punishment. Moral axioms stressing the 867 desirability of social approval are frequently repeated to children: 'As long as you help others, others will help you'; 'Nobody will help a thief', and so on.

If a child is naughty or tiresome—if it gets in the way, or makes a nuisance of itself, or if it excretes inside the house when it can walk out by itself—the annoyed adult will probably hit it in some way; it may be rapped over the head with the knuckles or have its ear tweaked, flicked with the fingers or cut with a switch; a man may catch it on the calves with the thin strap of his knife scabbard, a woman hit it with a stick such as is used for stirring food. These punishments for being a nuisance are given in a very impersonal way, almost as an automatic reaction to a disagreeable stimulus; a single movement is made, usually without the adult interrupting more than temporarily the work he or she is engaged on and without any verbal remonstrances or scoldings beyond that which may accompany the blow. The emphasis is on the annoyance or work caused to the adult, not on the naughtiness of the child. The punishments are always given immediately after the offence and in anger; they are given capriciously without any emphasis that they are for the child's good; children mustn't be a nuisance and mustn't cause unnecessary work. Occasionally when they are really cross people will hit a child harder than is necessary; Chimpet still carries the scar on his forehead from a blow he received from his mother when he was three or four years old; he kept on getting in her way while she was busy cooking, until she picked up a piece of firewood and hit him with it, unfortunately catching his forehead with a pointed edge. It is considered that usually one parent will punish a child more than the other, and it is generally the mother who does the most punishment. Often if one parent is cross with a child, the other will defend it: 'If both parents are angry together with a child at the same time they might kill it; if both spoil it the child will grow up naughty.'

But besides being an occasional nuisance, a child is also capable of committing crimes, and in such cases the punishment is severe and even drastic.* If a child steals (even fruit from the garden of a neighbour) or spoils anybody's property, or insults people or

* Many examples of these punishments are given in Chapter Fifteen.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[827 deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born
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868 At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food. 224 178

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed. 224 868 [753] 224 [834]

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or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes. 857

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend. 825 857 [868] [534]

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly. 857 [153]

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of 192 195

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in
[868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them.
[515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of
842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this
[828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she
[857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not
231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from
857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer
224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen,
868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." 224 [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural
[848] thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its
757

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

291 dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it.
[17] The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

301 The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes.
412 The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle
[268] at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried
[482] in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

241 The most important of the implements used for farming
412 is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

[17] The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

205 The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that
174 of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

869 copy their elders in prostrating themselves in front of the images of the lamaist gods, whether these gods are in the monastery or private houses.

858 The Lepchas are very explicit about their aims in the education of their children. Children fall into two categories—*ko-chet*, or good, and *ta-né*, or naughty. These terms are only applied to children and are clearly defined. 'A good child (*ko-chet*) will help its parents in the fields and in the house; will tell the truth and own up if it is charged with wrong-doing; will listen carefully to its elders and learn what they teach him; will help old people and will be peaceable. A bad child (*tané*) will tell lies and quarrel and insult people; if it is reproved it will draw its knife in anger and won't own up; it will take other people's property, and not do its proper share of the work.'

A child is not placed into one of these two categories early, for they are final and not temporary qualifications. The character of a young child is considered malleable, and the early years are used to evoke the *ko-chet* qualities and destroy the *tané* ones; a child is only called *tané* when it appears that education has failed. There is considerable variation of opinion as to when judgement can be finally made; some consider that a child's character is fixed at the age of eight, others that it will not completely manifest itself till the child is married; the general consensus of opinion is, however, that a child will fall into one of the two categories by the age of ten. Whatever age is chosen, it is believed that at that time, the child's character, previously vague and undetermined, is finally fixed and will not later be modified.

A child which may, if great care is not taken, later become *tané* is indicated in its earlier childhood by several characteristic traits; if it hacks at the house and door when it is given its knife, if it cries because it is scolded or because something is taken away from it which might be harmful or which does not belong to it, if it uses abusive language, these are all signs that the parents must be especially watchful. It is the parents' duty to eradicate such inborn naughtiness. A child's companions are also considered to be of great importance: 'Good companions will make a good child, bad companions a naughty one.' It is believed that excessive spoiling and indulgence by both parents may warp a child's character, but not irremediably.

If a child is not good by about the age of ten there is very little hope for it. The experiment may be tried of sending it away to be

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays 869
if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take 776
them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor
at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. 152
One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which 152
there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older 865
ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually [824]
identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel 591

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 539 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath. After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 869 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 824 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu, both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but [439 177] metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowadays replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

misfortune. Today this is not quite so true; the creation of permanent fields requires the renunciation of immediate good for future benefits, for the household which builds these fields will not be able to get as large a harvest as would otherwise be possible. The consequence is that the difference between the richest and the poorest in the community has somewhat increased, and that households which have a proportionately larger number of working adults to dependents are in a temporarily favoured position. So of course is the Mandal,[1] who can use the free labour to which he is entitled to have terraces made for him.

Up to the present as far as I can tell this new state of affairs has made no important difference to the Lepcha community; their habits of co-operation nullify the differences in wealth. One man even went so far as to say that he would not like to be the richest person in the community, unless everybody else was equally prosperous, as he would have to give all his superfluity to help others. Extra wealth carries with it extra duties; and in point of fact the richest people in Lingthem were also the most heavily indebted. At the same time it must be emphasised that it is the desire of every Lepcha to be rich; when I asked children what they would most like to be, a clever man, or a learned and respected lama, or a great hunter, or a rich man, they would one and all plump for being rich. Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, a member of the most devout lamaist family in Lingthem, and who was himself starting his religious instruction said 'I should like to go and study religion in a Tibetan monastery, but I don't want to go to the State school at Gangtok; the things they teach you there are quite useless, while a lama always gets good presents and feasts. Why, when a rich man dies even the *kané*, the accolyte attending the officiating lama, is given a fine plate and cup and clothes!'[2]

Unless the whole orientation of Lepcha life is changed even greater differences in actual wealth will not fundamentally alter the situation, for there is no possibility of any Lepcha, however rich, exploiting his neighbour, however poor. Help in the work of house or field is always repaid by equivalent help; the most

[1] See Chapter Five, p. 128.

[2] Chimpet's view of the value of secular education is not shared by his father or the other more serious adult members of the community. They have petitioned the State to establish a boarding school in Zongu, for they consider that the extra work entailed by the older children's absence would be counterbalanced by the value of the education received.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he 857 ● [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301 --Analyse]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
374 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
531 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.
874

532 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery
792 has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's
622 leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about
775 the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun,
[766] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, con- 582
sulted and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

[p. 222 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 no circumstances can the biological father teach his own son; any other relative who is properly qualified may do so. Thus Chimpet
875 was being taught by his 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon. If the teacher resides in the same house no formalities occur, but this is very rare; nearly always teachers are strangers, and often live in a different village to the pupil's parents. When the teacher has been selected the parents present him with a big pig, a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and the child goes to live with his teacher for three years, usually working for his teacher in the day-time, and receiving instruction in the evening. The child is allowed to visit his parents from time to time, but if he runs away he will be beaten and sent back. According to Tafoor, when he was a student one teacher might have six or seven pupils, and in consequence emulation increased the general level of knowledge; nowadays in Zongu most teachers have only a single pupil at a time, so that there are no spurs to overcome native indolence.

The preliminary instruction is almost entirely confined to the teaching of reading; there are small excerpts from the scriptures specially prepared for this purpose; the pupil learns by heart one page at a time. He is also taught to a certain extent methods of prayer and the playing of musical instruments, but these branches are pursued more fully when the teacher has given his pupil his ceremonial qualification or *loong*. I cannot find out to what extent this notion of *loong* is Tibetan, and to what extent specifically Lepcha; it recurs in all stages of Lepcha life whenever there is a teacher-pupil situation. When the pupil has learned whatever he is being taught—the ritual of the Mun, a sacred story, the correct method of sacrificing after hunting, the offering of *sakyou faat*—his teacher gives him a scarf and usually a ceremonial meal or drink, after which the pupil does whatever he has been taught in front of and for his teacher. When the teacher has given his pupil *loong* the boy is formally presented at the monastery with the ceremony of *di-tset*. This ceremony is a very small affair; the pupil and his teacher drink tea with two lamas and then the novice is presented with some *chi*, a scarf and a rupee in the name of the monastery. A novice so received is called *chapti-bu*. Even before this reception a pupil will often accompany his teacher or father to all ceremonies, making himself useful by helping in the fashioning of ceremonial objects, by holding the big metal instruments, and possibly by beating the gongs or drums.

793 Above *chapti-bu* there are six grades of lamas; to pass from one

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

88 Sexual experiment and adventure marriage
[882] and children follow in due course, but the Lepcha man is still growing up till about the age of thirty-six. At that period his responsibilities are liable to be heaviest; his parents will be retiring from the management of affairs, and he will have, if he is lucky, a number of young children to look after. As his sons grow up and become capable adults in their turn he is able to withdraw somewhat from work; if he is intelligent he is a *yeum-bu*—a man who knows—and as such will be often asked for his advice by the Mandal and by his juniors. If he retains his health and prosperity as he grows older, and if his children and grand-children are still alive he acquires a sort of talismanic virtue; younger men will take valuable presents to so fortunate an old man in order to get in return either his drinking cup or his rosary and to share a meal of rice with him, in order to acquire the desirable qualities of this prosperous great-grandfather. But if an old man survives his children and loses his capacity to work his position is an unenviable one; he too, like the young child, consumes more than he produces; he is a nuisance, not respected or listened to, treated at best with casual deference. For the Lepchas the normal span of life is four score years; until that age a man or woman should be capable of doing sufficient work to keep himself; those that survive longer are a misery to themselves and everybody else.

885 With one extremely important exception the curve of a woman's life follows that of the man's. Except for the accident of death there are no breaks or sudden transitions in a man's life; for the majority of women there is the geographical transfer to her husband's home; although the marriage customs soften this as much as possible it represents a psychological change for a woman which has no parallel in the life of a man. It is probably for this reason that young married women appear so much more self-possessed and grown-up than their husbands. A man who stays in his own community is perpetually classified as weaker, or younger, or stupider than his elders or contemporaries; a woman in a new village is free from such comparisons and takes her place according to her own merits and abilities. A woman of twenty takes her full rôle in the group of adult women; a man of thirty is still somewhat bashful and is inclined to hide behind the knowledge and experience of his elders.

88 The undulations on the curve of Lepcha life are the alternations of plenty and scarcity, of feasting and everyday life. There is no absolute contrast between plenty and scarcity, between a feast and an ordinary meal; it is a question of quantity rather than quality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

There is no seeking for ecstasy, for experiences contrasting sharply with the normal, no desire for sudden and dramatised pleasure or grief which will stand out sharply against the background of life. Unexpected death is inevitably dramatic, and is therefore particularly disliked and feared. The only dramatic situation welcomed in normal life is a short and illicit sexual encounter. The Lepcha ideal is a constant state of euphory without sharply contrasing situations. 88

Since the Lepchas do not divide life up into different periods it is understandable that they should have no formulated notions as to what is the best time of life. The greater number whom I questioned said that they considered that the happiest time was when people were *fleng* or *num-leng*; this term (the second is the female of the first) has no exact equivalent in English; it means a full-grown person or animal who has not yet borne young and can only be translated by the blanket term of 'youth and early married life'. Not all, however, agreed that this period was the happiest; Jiroong, for example, considered the happiest period to be old age, provided a person had children and was not infirm. Perhaps the best illustration of the general attitude is given by Tafoor when he said: 'The happiest time of all is *fleng*. If a married couple have no children they have no anxieties or cares; they can eat their fill of the best and need only think of themselves. But when they get old life will be very bad indeed; they will have no one to look after them, they will be lonely and live badly.

'If, on the other hand, they are like me with lots of children, life will be very hard. They will have to work a great deal to feed and clothe them, and they themselves will only have coarse food to eat. Like me they will be torn with anxiety because they have to work in the fields while a child is ill at home. (His three-year old daughter had a bad attack of chicken-pox.) Like me they will pass sleepless nights; last night I did not shut my eyes. But when they are old and their children are grown up, then life will be easy for them; they will have the best of everything and will not have to work hard; their children will look after them, and the end of their life will be good.'

[p.282 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ages of fifty and thirty; the remaining seven are between 842
twenty and thirty and for them there is still some chance of producing a child, for though copulation normally starts at or before puberty the average age for bearing the first child (worked out from the women of Lingthem) is over twenty-two; there are only three instances of a woman bearing a child before she was twenty. Most exceptionally for a primitive community it was possible in Zongu to get the exact age of every individual for the following reason. It is absolutely essential for participation in all lamaist 787
ceremonies for every Lepcha to know in which year of the twelve-year 'animal' cycle[17] they were born, for this affects birth and marriage, the diagnosis of disease, the suitability or otherwise of individual exorcists, and many other occasions in ordinary life. Also after he has completed his third (or exceptionally his fourth) cycle—that is to say when he is 36 or 48—it is obligatory for a Lepcha to make prophetic consultation as to the hazards and misfortunes which await him in the next twelve years. Although no Lepcha can state his age in years, everybody knows their 'animal' year, and with few exceptions, which can be checked by cross-reference, the number of cycles they have completed.

I have not been able to make up my mind as to the reason for 842
the great sterility of the Lepchas. It would seem as though it were the women rather than the men who were sterile, for in the greater number of cases of a man remarrying on account of his first wife's sterility the second wife has borne him children. A suggestion put forward by some Lepchas with whom I discussed the matter, though others considered it absolutely ludicrous, is that sterility may be due to premature copulation. The Lepchas do not recognise and 881
have no word for physical puberty, and most of them believe that 836
the signs of female puberty (swelling of the breasts and beginning 842
of menses) are the result of copulation and that therefore girls have to be copulated with in order that they may develop. A number of people admitted (if they were women) copulating with men when they were only ten or eleven, or (if they were men) more or less raping young girls. A number of the sterile women however 842
emphatically deny such premature experience, and I have no reason to suppose they were lying; and anyhow on the medical evidence it seems doubtful whether such premature experience would cause subsequent sterility, though it might render childbirth more difficult.

[17] This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; see also Appendix III.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 539 581 *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast. I am giving a somewhat shortened version of it in an Appendix,[8] but there are one or two points to which I should like to draw attention. Tarbong-bo, the inventor of marriage, was Itpomu's youngest son, and was still drinking her milk when he saw, desired and tried to rape Na-rip-nom; when he failed in this because he had not given the proper presents his mother sent him to his elder brother Komsi*thing* for advice and help. It will be noticed that there is no sort of transition or *rite de passage* between the child and the boy of marrying age; and that the elder brother, and not the father or paternal or maternal uncle is the natural person for a young man to turn to for help and advice. In the Mun mythology the father is never important; Débu, the husband of Itpomu, is merely a name, without personality or independent existence; it seems possible that he is a relatively modern importation. I think the same is possibly true of Tak-bo-*thing*, the grandchild of Itpomu and the child of Narzong-*nyou* (sometimes his father is Komsi*thing*, sometimes some other male supernatural); Tak-bo-*thing* is simultaneously a supernatural and the first human being and a great number of stories are told about him, chiefly to explain the origin of different human customs; but he is inextricably confused with Tashey-*thing* or Guru Rimpuché, and it seems to me probable that he is to a very great extent a Tibetan import, though probably anterior to the Lepcha's conversion to lamaism.

756 776 The chief supernaturals of the Mun are the two feminine deities Itpomu and Narzong-*nyou*. Itpomu herself is never directly invoked; it is always her creations who are sacrificed and prayed to. Narzong-*nyou* is really the chief Lepcha goddess; she is as it were the local God of Sikkim, of the Lepchas' country; she lived in the country and is responsible for its geography, flora, and, especially fauna. She is also responsible for a great number of institutions. Her elder brother and husband Komsi*thing* is also responsible for a number of habits and institutions, but he is in a way a foreigner; after he and his wife separated he took himself to Tibet. Except in the harvest rites the two of them are always mentioned in prayers and sacrifices, together with all the other supernaturals involved. The invocation usually takes hours, for all the relevant gods in all their manifestations, with their wives and their children must be mentioned by name; in private sacrifices

[8] See Appendix IV.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER TWELVE

SEX, MARRIAGE AND MATURITY

i

On the question of attaining sexual maturity the Lepchas differentiate between men and women far more overtly than they do in any other phase of the life cycle. Theoretically they ignore physical puberty, have no word or words to express it, and pay no sort of formal attention to its arrival. With males the achievement of full sexual potency is considered to be a slow maturing process, taking place automatically over a period of years, with actual puberty marking, as it were, a half-way stage; though most boys produce emissions from about the age of fifteen, they are not considered to have achieved full potency till from three to five years later. With women, on the other hand, the physical signs of puberty—the beginning of menses and the swelling of the breasts—are believed only to occur through the external influence either of a man or of a supernatural named Kandoo *moong*. It is thought that normally a virgin girl will not menstruate nor will her breasts swell; these physical alterations only take place after copulation. It does, however, occasionally—though, it is thought, rarely—happen that a virgin starts menstruating; this indicates a visit of the supernatural Kandoo *moong*, and is considered to be a sign of good luck; some of the older women boasted that they had thus been signalled by this supernatural. The majority of women, however, depend on the intervention of a man; the physical signs will start whenever a girl experiences copulation, and there is therefore no stigma attached to grown men forcing little girls of nine or ten, and this does occur occasionally. It is possible that this cultural explanation of physiological processes masks a deep-seated male envy of the more conspicuous and dramatic life-giving functions of women and an attempt to make them appear dependent on male intervention. It would seem that this notion is at the base of the initiatory rites in many tribes of New Guinea and Australia, where

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827 881]
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer
831 himself writes : "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex ;
it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all
[562] their humour ; it is regarded as almost as essential as food.
Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost
impersonal ; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal
relationships passionately adhered to between sexual part-
ners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between
[562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

881 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend
831 to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts
114 and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship
562 with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 158 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

in other places. The Rong women are not so simple as to be taken in by such a man-made legend. They, on the contrary, affirm that the sexual maturity of girls and the development of the secondary sex characteristics occur without sexual relationship with man. The only difference is that the breasts of the girl who had had sexual relationship with man would produce some milk. The Maharaja of Sikkim and other educated Sikkimese, who read Gorer's book, found his description to be a defamation of the Lepcha character.

The Lepchas are the descendants of the first brother Lepcha, as reported above. They fall into three divisions, which are named after the districts in which they live. The Ilame Lepchas live in the Ilame district of Nepal; the Dandjung Lepchas on the other side of the Tista river in Sikkim; the Dam-sang Lepchas in Indian Sikkim and Bhutan. The second brother was called God-she, and is the father of the Jimdar tribe. The third was Meche, and he is the proto-parent of the Meche. Each of these three have a different language.[112]

B. Sikkim Yak-tamba

There is in Sikkim a class of people who are called Limbu by the Nepalese and Tzong-pa by the Tibetans. They call themselves Yak-tamba, Ek-tamba and Ek-tambu. Tradition has it that, after the Lepchas, they are the oldest inhabitants of the place having settled there before the Tibetans and the Nepalese came to settle in the land. They are intermixed with the Rong in a very remarkable manner. At the present time they inhabit the land to the west as far as the river Arun as we have already pointed out before. They are regarded as divisions of the Limbu and bear a very close resemblance to them. The Yak-tamba have flatter faces and more Mongoloid features than the Lepchas.

C. The Bhodja of Sikkim

The Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim are called the Sikkim Bhodja. Legend links the Tibetan Je-khye-bu-

112. cfr. the report of the Rai given above concerning the first parents and their three sons; see p. 7, 38. Here we have the same content of the myth.

[pp. 110 – 159 not processed]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry, but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

88 Sexual experiment And adventure / marriage

[882] and children follow in due course, but the Lepcha man is still growing up till about the age of thirty-six. At that period his responsibilities are liable to be heaviest; his parents will be retiring from the management of affairs, and he will have, if he is lucky, a number of young children to look after. As his sons grow up and become capable adults in their turn he is able to withdraw somewhat from work; if he is intelligent he is a *yeum-bu*—a man who knows—and as such will be often asked for his advice by the Mandal and by his juniors. If he retains his health and prosperity as he grows older, and if his children and grand-children are still alive he acquires a sort of talismanic virtue; younger men will take valuable presents to so fortunate an old man in order to get in return either his drinking cup or his rosary and to share a meal of rice with him, in order to acquire the desirable qualities of this prosperous great-grandfather. But if an old man survives his children and loses his capacity to work his position is an unenviable one; he too, like the young child, consumes more than he produces; he is a nuisance, not respected or listened to, treated at best with casual deference. For the Lepchas the normal span of life is four score years; until that age a man or woman should be capable of doing sufficient work to keep himself; those that survive longer are a misery to themselves and everybody else.

885 With one extremely important exception the curve of a woman's life follows that of the man's. Except for the accident of death there are no breaks or sudden transitions in a man's life; for the majority of women there is the geographical transfer to her husband's home; although the marriage customs soften this as much as possible it represents a psychological change for a woman which has no parallel in the life of a man. It is probably for this reason that young married women appear so much more self-possessed and grown-up than their husbands. A man who stays in his own community is perpetually classified as weaker, or younger, or stupider than his elders or contemporaries; a woman in a new village is free from such comparisons and takes her place according to her own merits and abilities. A woman of twenty takes her full rôle in the group of adult women; a man of thirty is still somewhat bashful and is inclined to hide behind the knowledge and experience of his elders.

88 The undulations on the curve of Lepcha life are the alternations of plenty and scarcity, of feasting and everyday life. There is no absolute contrast between plenty and scarcity, between a feast and an ordinary meal; it is a question of quantity rather than quality.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child [428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

● 883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does 831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no [521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should [212 be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental 535] occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen 584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

597 adopted as children five show very considerable deviance from the Lepcha norm; Takneum *youmi* is bad-tempered, especially with children (it will be remembered that he was the man who twice committed sodomy); Kurma has a desire for power, is boastful, and shows decided sadistic traits; Rigya is a horder who gloats over his hidden wealth; Agyung is surly and very rude and heartless towards his elders, and especially to his adopting father Serving, who is ninety and nearly blind; and Gongyop is extremely nervous. The sixth adopted adult, Chelim, appeared to me to be a normal and well-adjusted Lepcha; I did not have much contact with him and was unable to get his life-story.

●885 The Lepcha manner of life is arranged on the supposition that birth and death will take place regularly and at the proper times; and when these suppositions are falsified by fact, readjustments, which often result in maladjustments, have to be made. The Lepchas plan for big households of four generations with the chief authority in the third generation; a man is thought to be in the prime of life and to be capable of exercising authority chiefly in his fourth and fifth cycles—that is between the ages of thirty-six and sixty. Before the age of about thirty-six Lepcha men are extremely un-self-reliant and diffident; they act as though they were unused to making decisions for themselves, almost as though they were not fully grown-up. Among the Lepchas I nearly always considerably under-estimated people's ages. After the age of sixty a man should be able to retire somewhat from the harder labours of life to be supported by his children and grandchildren.

183 Such is the ideal; but sterility and a very unevenly distributed
592 death-rate destroy these expectations; old men find they have to work either because they have no sons, or else their sons are dead; children who should be living in a large family find themselves isolated. The ideal Lepcha household would consist of about sixteen people; in Lingthem the average is a little over five to a house. Only six households are relatively complete, and of these only two, the households of Tafoor and Ongden, are considered by other Lepchas to approach the ideal arrangement.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

88 Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage
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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SIX

THE RULES OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

i

When a Lepcha speaks of 'we' he generally means all the people of his village. But besides these geographical divisions Lepchas are divided up into other groups by birth and marriage; these groups are the patrilineal clan, or *ptso*, and the immediate and extended family. Unlike their neighbours, the Nepali, the Lepchas have a very small number of kinship terms;[1] fewer even than we have, for they exclude all the category of cousins, and, except for the mother's brothers, make no distinction between the paternal and maternal lines. For people younger than the speaker, too, they do not make any distinction of sex; the same word is used for a younger brother or a younger sister, for a son or a daughter, for a nephew or a niece. Only in the case of children's spouses are different words used for son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

881 through ritual and symbolism men attempt to arrogate to themselves women's physiological functions; perhaps the most striking of these rites is the urethral sub-incision practised by some Australian tribes. Since, unfortunately, nothing is known of the other Mongolian peoples of the Himalayas, it is impossible to state whether this notion is peculiar to the Lepchas, or whether it is shared by their Northern neighbours. The Hindus and the Nepali converts to Hinduism stress overtly the rivalry between the sexes, and adduce the inferiority of women through their magically dangerous and infectious functions of menstruation and child-birth.

886 Just as there is no formally marked beginning of sexual life, so there is no formally marked end of it. The menopause is ignored; the dream of copulation with a supernatural, which marks the menses, is meant to continue after it; and sexual pleasure is considered to be equally strong at any period of life. There appears to be no fear of impotence; sexual appetite and an appetite for food are openly equated, and it is considered that, except through illness or old age, the loss of one is as unlikely as the loss of the other.

833 Some men make a distinction between pre-puberty and post-puberty sexual activity, but this distinction is personal and not cultural. Most men, when talking of their past lives, emphasise what was their first 'real' sexual experience; but some place this first experience very early, at the age of eleven or twelve. I think the operative distinction in the mind of the Lepcha is whether the sexual adventure formed part of a play, or was undertaken seriously for its own sake.

582 584 [833] Lepcha society gives the children a sexual rôle very early; girls are betrothed and occasionally married from the age of eight onwards, and boys from the age of twelve. In Lingthem it seems as though this very early age for betrothal has been somewhat raised in recent years; Mrs. Datoop and one or two other of the elder women in the community were betrothed at the age of eight and married shortly after; but in 1937 there was no betrothed girl aged less than twelve, nor was any young man betrothed to a girl under that age. It is quite probable that this change in the age of betrothal is local and temporary; the Lepchas did not consider that the situation had altered in any way. Even today most young people are betrothed before or at any rate as soon as they arrive at physical puberty, and consequently enter that state with an already selected sexual partner. In 1937 the only unbetrothed girl over thirteen was Prumtu; there were eight boys over sixteen un-

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827 881]
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[437] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415 bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri, the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[351] 794 tree tomato bushes, chilli bushes, onions, etc. inside the monastery precincts; but for the greater part of his food he is dependent on gifts from the villagers. The holder of this office was a very old man called Pong-ring, born in 1852; he was very feeble, half blind, suffered from polyps which made him almost incomprehensible even to the Lepchas, and his body was covered with the most revolting open sores. To accommodate our staff he had been turned out of his house and was taken as a boarder by the next nearest house, the owner of which, Jiroong, could trace a very distant relationship with him. In his very old age he was abnormally pious, hardly moving without his personal prayer wheel. He had never received proper religious instruction and could not read (or go through the motions of reading); his devotions were limited to those of the uninstructed and usually illiterate nuns and a number of rather unkind jokes, considering his age and feebleness, were [868] made about his position as head of the female congregation. As an old man past his work, unable to support himself and without children, he was not respected by the other Lepchas, most of whom felt, as I did, that he would be better dead; and some of the rather heartless children used to call out to him 'Why don't you die now while the Europeans are here, so that they can see your funeral?'. He was constantly having attacks of illness, but always recovered, to my, I hope, disguised distress; he was a very unpleasant spectacle and neighbour, and I should have liked to have seen the funeral of a lama, which I was not able to do.

351 At the back of the monastery the wooded hill goes up steeply to some cultivated land and a small group of houses. To the west is a small open alp with a few fruit trees in it, and beyond that slightly rising ground, this year not cultivated, and then about half a mile or more away another group of four houses.

iii

621 The monastery is almost exactly in the middle of Lingthem. Of the 33 houses 14 are above the monastery and the rest below, 14 to the east and the rest to the west. There are five groups of four houses each, one of three, and the rest either isolated or in pairs.

342 Lepcha houses are rectangular buildings raised about four feet off the ground on stone piles which go round three sides of the building; the east side is left open, and the space underneath serves as a shelter at night for domestic animals. The building

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER SIX

THE RULES OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

i

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

88 Sexual experiment And adventure marriage
[882] and children follow in due course, but the Lepcha man is still grow-
885 ing up till about the age of thirty-six. At that period his responsibilities are liable to be heaviest; his parents will be retiring from the management of affairs, and he will have, if he is lucky, a number of young children to look after. As his sons grow up and become
888 capable adults in their turn he is able to withdraw somewhat from work; if he is intelligent he is a *yeum-bu*—a man who knows—and as such will be often asked for his advice by the Mandal and by his juniors. If he retains his health and prosperity as he grows older, and if his children and grand-children are still alive he acquires a sort of talismanic virtue; younger men will take valuable presents to so fortunate an old man in order to get in return either his drinking cup or his rosary and to share a meal of rice with him, in order to acquire the desirable qualities of this prosperous great-grandfather. But if an old man survives his children and loses his capacity to work his position is an unenviable one; he too, like the young child, consumes more than he produces; he is a nuisance, not respected or listened to, treated at best with casual deference. For the Lepchas the normal span of life is four score years; until that age a man or woman should be capable of doing sufficient work to keep himself; those that survive longer are a misery to themselves and everybody else.

885 With one extremely important exception the curve of a woman's life follows that of the man's. Except for the accident of death there are no breaks or sudden transitions in a man's life; for the majority of women there is the geographical transfer to her husband's home; although the marriage customs soften this as much as possible it represents a psychological change for a woman which has no parallel in the life of a man. It is probably for this reason that young married women appear so much more self-possessed and grown-up than their husbands. A man who stays in his own community is perpetually classified as weaker, or younger, or stupider than his elders or contemporaries; a woman in a new village is free from such comparisons and takes her place according to her own merits and abilities. A woman of twenty takes her full rôle in the group of adult women; a man of thirty is still somewhat bashful and is inclined to hide behind the knowledge and experience of his elders.

88 The undulations on the curve of Lepcha life are the alternations of plenty and scarcity, of feasting and everyday life. There is no absolute contrast between plenty and scarcity, between a feast and an ordinary meal; it is a question of quantity rather than quality.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own. 592 [765]

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive. 592 888

[p. 344 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
● 888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Pong Ring, the mohastery verger.

Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

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[facing p. 22]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought [823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a 351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch, [322] especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered, [137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[888] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away.
796 On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

iv

756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék*-ing, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The
783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth
[843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék*-ing is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou faat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup on the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou faat* cannot
[585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~[illegible]~~ relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Sunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of [314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was [781] still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old [888] and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and, [857] without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong 533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.